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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. ROBERT NEWTON, D.D.



Robert Newton.

THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. ROBERT NEWTON, D.D.

BY

THOMAS JACKSON.

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“By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.”—1 Cor. xv. 10, 11.

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PREFACE.

THE biography of the late Dr. Newton is not a subject that I should myself have chosen, not because I had any doubt respecting his purity and uprightness, or the propriety of placing his personal history before the world; but because of the difficulty of doing justice to a character of such rare excellence, and to a course of action so peculiar and unique. But when his family requested me to undertake the service, and their wishes were seconded by several of his brethren in the ministry, whom he highly esteemed, and who were deeply concerned for his honour, I felt that I ought not to refuse at least to make the attempt.

But scarcely had I begun to collect materials for the work, when it pleased God, by a stroke of His providence, to disqualify me for the task which I had undertaken. He took from me my best earthly friend, who had been the wife of my youth, the mother of my children, and my ever-faithful companion and adviser for nearly forty-five years. The dispensation was, indeed, mingled with mercy; for, perhaps, few persons have had a more peaceful and gentle removal from the sufferings of this life to the joys of the heavenly paradise: yet such a bereavement was a sad reality, and for a time rendered it impossible for me to proceed with my engagement. As soon as I was able, I entered upon the task, and found it to be a means of mental relief. It was impossible to trace the gradual development of such a character as that of Dr. Newton, and to describe his wonderful ministry,

without pleasurable emotions, and even spiritual profit. Yet, after all, the state of my own feelings may have thrown an air of pensiveness over some parts of the narrative; and if so, the candid reader, it is hoped, will excuse and forgive it. The whole has been written under an impressive view of the brevity of life, and of the inestimable value of that personal faith in Christ crucified, which secures peace to the conscience, and purity to the heart, and which prepares mankind alike to meet the trials and sorrows that inevitably await them in this world, and to enjoy the endless happiness of the heavenly state.

The materials for the Life of Dr. Newton have been found to be far more rich and ample than they were apprehended to be. Knowing that his was a course of incessant activity, I concluded that he kept no daily journal of his proceedings, and that his correspondence consisted of scarcely anything but laconic answers to applications for ministerial service. In this I have been pleasingly disappointed. He did not, indeed, keep any journal, except during the time of his visit to America; but his letters to Mrs. Newton, which he wrote when he spent any considerable time from home, and which she kindly placed at my disposal, I found to be singularly copious and interesting. They contain valuable sketches of his public labours, and disclose, with unreserved and admirable simplicity, the feelings of his heart, while he was engaged in a course of labour which astonished the world. They show the conscientious fidelity with which he endeavoured to prosecute his ministry, and the anxious feeling of responsibility with which he contemplated his ever-growing popularity, and the consequent influence which, from day to

day, he had over immense masses of people. His letters also place his domestic character in a light the most amiable and attractive. Many persons who have been accustomed to regard him only as the eloquent orator, the popular Preacher, and the unwearied advocate of Missions to the Heathen, will here see him as the kind husband, and the tenderly-affectionate father, whose yearnings for the conversion and salvation of his children were deep and incessant.

To the Wesleyan Ministers, and various other friends of Dr. Newton, who have kindly allowed me the use of documents in their possession, or have forwarded to me facts illustrative of his character and history, my very cordial thanks are due, and are respectfully tendered. Their names are, for the most part, introduced into the narrative. But for these valuable communications, the Life of this very eminent man would have been far less perfect than it now appears.

I cannot forbear to express the satisfaction I feel in placing before the Christian Church, and especially the Wesleyan section of it, this record of the life and labours of Dr. Robert Newton; a man who was adorned with every virtue, and whose eminent abilities, through a long life, were directed to the one object of promoting the spiritual good of mankind, and that to the widest possible extent. His fidelity as a Methodist Preacher was perhaps never surpassed. Mr. Wesley declared it to be his belief, that God's design in raising up the Methodists as a distinct community, was not to secure any party interests, but to rouse a slumbering nation, and call its attention to Christian godliness in its vitality and power; and

at the close of his life he made certain important arrangements, the object of which was, as he expresses it, "to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure;" "provided they continue to walk by faith, and show forth their faith by their works."

None of Mr. Wesley's sons in the Gospel ever entered more fully into these views than Dr. Newton. He had in him nothing of a sectarian spirit, and much less had he any of its bitterness; but his attachment to his own people, and to their ecclesiastical order, was conscientious and unwavering. All his energies were devoted to the advancement of spiritual religion,—the life of God in the soul of man,—"the kingdom" which "is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The various arrangements and institutions of Wesleyan Methodism he knew from experience and extensive observation to be well adapted to foster and advance this great purpose; and hence, when, a few years ago, the tide of innovation set in against the Wesleyan economy, he acted as its meek but faithful guardian; anxious that it should retain its spiritual character, and be transmitted to posterity in unimpaired efficiency; so that, according to the design of its venerable Founder, generations yet unborn might share in its benefits. In spirit he was gentle as a child, but in the cause of righteousness and truth he was a pattern of manliness and decision. In this and in other respects he has bequeathed to his brethren and successors in the Wesleyan Ministry an example which is scarcely less valuable than the services of his long and active life.

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THE LIFE
OF THE
REV. ROBERT NEWTON, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

IN the last century, and the beginning of the present, there lived a couple, upon whom it pleased God, in the dispensations of His providence and grace, to bestow many rich and substantial blessings, such as are not vouchsafed to the generality of mankind. They bore the names of Francis and Anne Newton. He was born in the year 1732, Old Style, and she about eleven years later. Her maiden name was Booth. They were both of yeoman descent, and were an honour to the class of people to which they belonged. They were tall, comely, and well-favoured in their personal appearance; each of them possessed a sound and vigorous understanding; and in respect of intelligence they surpassed the greater part of their contemporaries of the same rank in life. They occupied a farm at Roxby, a hamlet on the sea-coast, between Whitby and Guisborough, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, where they spent their time in honest industry, remote from the gay and fashionable world, from the anxieties of commerce, and from the smoke and din of mining and manufacturing operations; the soil which they

cultivated, and the flocks which they reared and tended, supplying them with the necessaries and conveniences of life. He loved the sports of the field, was of a social spirit, possessed some knowledge of music, relished what was called "a good song," and was therefore a frequent guest at convivial parties in his own neighbourhood; but she was rather sedate in her temper and habits. Yet they were not happy; for they knew nothing of godliness but its form. They *said* their prayers, they attended the public worship of God in the parish church, and occasionally received the supper of the Lord: but they knew not God as the God of pardoning mercy; they did not "worship Him in spirit and in truth;" nor were they delivered from the power of their evil nature by the grace of the Holy Spirit. These were subjects of which they had no just conception, any more than their neighbours.

The religious history of Mr. and Mrs. Newton suggests an impressive view of the aggressive and missionary character of Wesleyan Methodism. It was the persuasion of the Founder of the system, that he and his fellow-labourers were raised up neither to overthrow the Established Church, nor to root out Dissent, but to spread scriptural holiness through the land. In this sentiment they were all agreed; and therefore waited not till ignorant multitudes should apply to them for instruction, and profligate transgressors should inquire of them the way of life and salvation. They rather forced an entrance into neighbourhoods where wickedness abounded, warning the people of their danger, calling them to repentance, and pointing them to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Some of these faithful and self-denying men found their way to Roxby, where their services were greatly needed.

Among the foremost of them was the Rev. James Rogers, who was a personal friend of the venerable Wesley, and the husband of Hester Ann Rogers, whose biography and devotional writings have long been deservedly popular, and extensively useful. Public rumour laid many and grievous complaints to the charge of these enterprising strangers: yet Mr. Newton, urged mainly by curiosity, ventured to hear them. Mr. Rogers requested permission to preach in the house of Mr. Newton. This was denied, but he was allowed to pray with the family; and it was not long before still greater favour was shown to the unpopular cause of Methodism. The Rev. John King came to Roxby, expecting to preach in a barn, which appears to have been promised; but when the time came, the promise was revoked, and Mr. Newton, seeing the Preacher and the congregation disappointed, offered them the use of his house; for he and Mrs. Newton both began to feel the force of Divine truth, and to perceive that they needed something to which they were strangers, in order to their safety and happiness. At this time some friend placed in their hands the incomparable "Journal of John Nelson;" by the reading of which, in connexion with the faithful ministry of God's word, they were deeply convinced of their guilty, miserable, perilous, and helpless condition, as sinners in the sight of God. Their consciences were alarmed, and their hearts became contrite; they "found trouble and sorrow;" for they could neither divest themselves of their guilty fear, nor overcome the evils of their fallen nature. They had formerly thought favourably of themselves; but they now painfully felt that they fell immensely short of the truly Christian character. In this state they betook themselves to prayer, especially

secret prayer, imploring the mercy of God through the sacrifice of Christ. They wept, and made supplication, trusting alone in the atonement and intercession of their compassionate Saviour; and in this manner they received the salvation of God, consisting in the kindred blessings of justification, and a new and holy nature. Their consciences were now at rest, and their hearts the seat of heavenly affections; and hence they entered upon a course of consistent and active piety, their entire spirit and demeanour proving that they had passed from death unto life, and were new creatures in Christ Jesus. Feeling every hour the mighty benefits of the change which had passed upon them, they were thankful for the instrumentality by which they had been brought into the way of righteousness and peace: they were warmly attached to the doctrine and discipline of the Methodist body, and continued so to the end of their lives.

Pitying their ungodly neighbours, and feeling in themselves an earnest desire to honour Christ, by the spread of His truth, and the extension of His kingdom, they requested the Methodist Preachers of the Whitby Circuit to include Roxby in their plan of labour, offering to them and their horses suitable accommodation, and proposing that the largest room in their house should be used for the regular ministration of the word of life. The invitation was accepted; and a plain, earnest sermon was henceforth delivered once a fortnight in the farm-house on a week-day evening, where many of the peasants, men and women, were accustomed to hear the saving truths of the Gospel. When these simple and unpretending services were begun, neither Mr. and Mrs. Newton, nor the Preachers who visited them, had any adequate apprehension of the vast

results to which they would ultimately lead. A class was soon formed, of which Mr. Newton became the devoted and efficient Leader.

His pious zeal was not confined to his own immediate neighbourhood. At a distance of two miles from his residence was a large and populous village, in which there was no place of worship, and where ungodliness and sin, as might be expected, were generally prevalent. Here Mr. Newton hired a large room, for the purpose of religious worship; and the place was regularly supplied by the Travelling and Local Preachers of the Whitby Circuit, Mr. Newton and a friend of kindred spirit bearing the expense from year to year. He also took the charge of the class which was formed there; and held a public service, once a fortnight, for the benefit of the people, praying with them, reading and expounding the holy Scriptures, weeping over those who would not be reclaimed, and exerting himself, in every possible way, to promote their conversion and salvation. Though he and the pious few who were associated with him were often hooted as they passed along the streets, and saluted with stones and brickbats, yet they found an ample reward in the peace which they possessed in their own consciences, and in the growing success of their labours; for, though many refused to be reclaimed, others received the word in the love of the truth, and became at once examples of spiritual enjoyment and of holy living.

Mr. and Mrs. Newton were greatly blessed with respect to their offspring, having six sons and two daughters, all of whom became examples of Christian godliness, and four of their sons remarkable for their talents and usefulness as Ministers of the Gospel. The following are the names of the gifted children whom God graciously gave to them,

and over whom their hearts yearned with parental joy and affection:—Booth, (who was born February 24th, 1768,) Mary, Francis, Thomas, Ann, Robert, Jacob, and John; of whom only Francis and Thomas now remain. The rest have followed their parents to the world of spirits.

Booth, the firstborn of Mr. and Mrs. Newton, was in very early life made a partaker of God's mercy in Jesus Christ, and was accepted by Mr. Wesley, as an Itinerant Preacher, in the year 1790. He was a man of noble bearing, of portly mien, with a powerful and commanding voice, and was greatly respected for his talents as a Preacher; but his ministerial career was comparatively short. He sickened and died in the midst of his labours and strength.

Robert was born September 8th, 1780, and was dedicated to God, in the sacrament of baptism, on the 11th of the same month. Early in life he manifested a fine, sprightly disposition, and distinguished himself as an energetic and fearless boy. He was a great favourite with his mother, who had an impression (not very uncommon, perhaps, among mothers) that he would attain to eminence in future years; and it is gratifying to know, that both she and her husband lived to witness his popularity and usefulness. Before he was ten years of age, he was accustomed to walk two miles, in the morning and afternoon, to a village school, which was conducted by a man of the name of Foster, who may be taken as a fair specimen of the country Schoolmasters of those times. He could teach children to read and write, and to understand the elements of grammar and arithmetic; and it was not long before this worthy pedagogue had the indiscretion to confess, among his pot-companions at an ale-house, "That lad, Robert Newton, has learned all that I am able to teach."

This speech was reported to the father, who immediately took his son home, and set him to work upon the farm. In the subsequent years of his life, Robert often referred to his early performances as a farmer's boy. He milked the cows, fetched home the geese in the evening, counted the sheep to see that none were missing, followed the plough, and rode the horse to a neighbouring town for seed-corn in the season of spring. One of his companions of the same age, who is still living, used to walk by his side for hours together, when he was ploughing the fields, listening to his lively conversation, and to his recitals of poetry, ample stores of which he had committed to memory. He also exercised his ingenuity in the construction of a flute, upon which he learned to play, as an amusement in his leisure hours. At the age of eleven years he rode to Whitby, to receive confirmation at the hands of the Archbishop of York.

Among Robert's acquaintance, at this period of his life, was John Jackson, who afterwards became one of the most distinguished artists of his age, and a Member of the Royal Academy. He was the son of a village tailor, and for a time followed his father's occupation,—making and repairing garments for the farmers and peasantry in that part of Yorkshire. Yet, even then, the love of art predominated in his mind; and he not unfrequently attempted to sketch the features of his friend Robert. One of these early efforts of his pencil is still preserved in the family, and is said to be an excellent likeness. Nobody then suspected the eminence to which these two country lads would attain by the force of their own talents and genius. Jackson's abilities were called forth under the kind patronage of an English nobleman: the latent powers of young Newton

were developed under the influence of Methodism. When Jackson was in the height of his popularity in London, as a portrait-painter, his friend Newton, who was equally distinguished as a public speaker, often remarked that he had once coaxed the young artist to make him a waistcoat; and when they met, as they frequently did, the incidents connected with their boyish intercourse were to them a source of endless amusement.*

From August, 1792, to August, 1793, the Rev. John Kershaw, then a young man, occupied the place of second Preacher in the Whitby Circuit, and regularly visited Roxby once a month, being entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Newton, and ministering the word of life under their roof. After hearing him preach, Mr. Newton once said to him, the tears starting from his eyes, "I know not how it is; but you gentlemen show my neighbours the way of salvation, and yet they will not walk in it. The truth is clearly made known to them; but they will have none of these things." The truth, however, which was disregarded by many others produced its impression upon the members of

* Jackson was once engaged to paint a full-length portrait of the Duke of Wellington for some public institution, when a difference of opinion arose between them as to the attitude in which his Grace should stand; and, as the Duke had long been accustomed to command, he would have his own way in this case, and the artist for the time was compelled to submit. He succeeded, however, in drawing the Duke into an agreeable conversation, so that he became bland and free; and then, with admirable tact, he said, "Your Grace will excuse me, but the attitude which you have chosen is exactly that of a Drill-Sergeant." This observation put an end to the dispute. Without offering another word of objection, the great General assumed the position which the artist recommended. It was not befitting for the conqueror of Bonaparte to appear as a subaltern; and Jackson was pleased to think that he had overcome the hero of a hundred battles.

his own family. His son Robert was then a well-grown boy, tall, ingenuous, intelligent, and active; and he usually slept with Mr. Kershaw in these monthly visits. Mr. Kershaw greatly admired him, cherished towards him a strong affection, and earnestly desired his salvation. "I took the opportunity," says he, in a letter which he addressed to the writer of this narrative, "of impressing upon his youthful mind the truths which I had been preaching, and enforced the necessity of salvation through faith in Christ's atonement. These conversations had, through the blessing of God, their desired effect upon his mind. He wept, and earnestly prayed that God would have mercy upon him, so as to pardon his sins, and bestow upon him the blessing of a new heart. One of his sisters, also, a remarkably fine and clever young woman, was, at the same time, deeply affected in the same manner, and gave signs of sincere repentance. He often afterwards called me his spiritual father,—an honour which I much wonder should have been assigned to me."

This appears to have been the time of his first religious awakening; and the sorrowful convictions of the evil and danger of sin, of which he then gave decisive evidence, exerted a powerful influence upon his mind long afterwards. He became an attentive hearer of sermons, and showed a maturity of judgment, with respect to evangelical truth, which was surprising in a boy of his tender age. He believed that he should not only be a converted and pious man, but a Methodist Preacher, and turned his attention to the structure and composition of sermons. A letter which he wrote to a well-disposed youth, when he had himself become an aged man, places in a striking light the predominant feeling of his heart,

and the maturity of judgment of which he was possessed, at this early period of his life. The letter bears the date of August 8th, 1849,—the time of the Manchester Conference. It is as follows:—

“1 Tim. ii. 4: ‘Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.’

“i. What are we here to understand by ‘the truth?’

“ii. What is intended by ‘the knowledge of the truth?’

“iii. What is the salvation consequent upon the knowledge of the truth?

“iv. What reason have we to believe that God wills the salvation of all men?

“My dear David,—The above is the first outline of a sermon I ever attempted. I was then from ten to twelve years of age. I had then an impression that I should some time be in the Wesleyan ministry. I have now had a place in that ministry during the lapse of fifty years. Who can tell what is before you? The Lord direct you!”

Yet, notwithstanding these convictions, and even aspirations to the ministerial office, he underwent various changes, both in respect of his outward circumstances, and the state of his mind and heart, before he attained to the truly Christian character, and was called to labour in the word and doctrine.

He was apprenticed to Mr. Ralph Sigsworth, of Stokesley, who appears to have carried on the business of a draper, a grocer, and a druggist; but the confinement of a shop neither accorded with his health, nor with the irrepressible desire which he cherished for a greater amount of muscular action. His spirits began to droop, and his strength to fail. His kind and considerate master, therefore, gave him the indenture by which he was bound, and

allowed him to return to his father's farm, where he found employment more congenial with his constitution, and the habits which he had formed.

After his return to his father's house, his heart was not at rest, for he did not love God; and in the absence of that heavenly principle there is no real enjoyment, let a man's outward circumstances be what they may. As he advanced in his teens, he betrayed that restlessness which is always consequent upon alienation from God, especially when the conscience is awakened, and the invitations of the Gospel are not cordially accepted. At one time he was inclined to entertain the infidel notions of Paine, which then engaged the public attention; but this fact he did not dare to disclose in the presence of his father. Then his imagination was fired by the stirring accounts of military valour which the public papers contained, and the invasion with which England was menaced by the Republicans of France; he enrolled himself with a company of volunteers, and learned the sword-exercise; and then his heart was set upon entering into the regular army. Yet the authority of his father over him was complete; and by that authority the wayward youth was effectually restrained from his purpose.

And now, at length, the designs of God with respect to this interesting young man were disclosed. The years 1797 and 1798 were seasons of great spiritual prosperity to the Wesleyan body. Extensive revivals of religion took place; and the Whitby Circuit, where the family of the Newtons lived, was favoured with rich effusions of Divine influence, in consequence of which many wanderers from God were reclaimed, large accessions were made to the Societies, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes

both of men and women." During this season of special visitation Robert Newton was made a partaker of the salvation from sin which the Gospel reveals, and fully entered upon the enjoyments, the duties, and the conflicts of the Christian life.

In his case, no particular instrumentality was employed in reviving the gracious convictions which he had formerly experienced in connexion with the preaching and conversation of Mr. Kershaw. He saw the people press, in great numbers, to his father's house, to hear the Gospel, and to unite in prayer; he witnessed the sorrow of penitent sinners, the joy of the young converts, and the godly zeal of those who had long known the Lord. Along with many others, his sister Mary was made happy in God; and as she went about the house discharging her daily duties, as well as in the company of her brothers, she sang, in strains of the purest devotion, and with irresistible sweetness and power, the Wesleyan hymns; thus giving utterance to the joyous feelings of her sanctified mind. She was a young woman of great personal beauty, of a fine form, an amiable disposition, and possessed a melodious voice, in the use of which she enlivened the singing in the Methodist meetings.

In these circumstances, Robert's former convictions were renewed. The Holy Spirit again came upon him as the Spirit of bondage and fear, giving him to feel his guilt, and consequent liability to future misery; so that he had no rest until he had submitted himself to the righteousness of God, by fleeing to Christ for refuge. Of his religious history at this important period, the Rev. William Toase has kindly supplied the following account:—

“We were born within a few miles of each other; and

I well remember him in his youthful days, and at the beginning of his religious life. When I was very young, I often listened to the fervent prayers of his good father, with attention and feeling, as he poured out his soul to God at our village prayer-meetings. The word of the Lord was precious in those days; and the arrival of 'the Round Preacher' in one of our small towns or villages was an event which we hailed with thankfulness and joy. If we wished to hear a sermon from one of our appointed Ministers more than once a month, we had to travel two, four, and even six or eight miles, often in by-paths, bad roads, and amidst the winter's snow.

"In the year 1797, under the zealous and effective ministry of the Rev. Jonathan Brown and the Rev. Thomas Vasey, there was a gracious revival of religion throughout the Whitby Circuit. Upwards of four hundred persons were added to the Societies, and crowds flocked to our humble place of worship. At this time, Robert Newton was deeply convinced of sin. His sorrow was intense, and continued for the space of nine weeks. Such was the interest that was taken in his case, by the pious people in the neighbourhood, that a special prayer-meeting was held one Sunday afternoon, at Lofthouse, in his behalf, at which I was present. On that occasion, although he was much encouraged by the prayers which were offered for him, and the advice which he received from Christians of experience, yet he did not then find peace with God. This blessing, I believe, he afterwards received in his own room in his father's house at Roxby."

With this statement, the accounts which have been furnished by other persons who were acquainted with him in early life are in perfect agreement. They all describe his

penitential sorrow as poignant and long-continued. They state that the deep dejection of his spirit was depicted in his countenance; that he mourned over the hardness of his heart; and that he obtained peace with God, not in a public meeting, but in private. Yet, when he obtained this "pearl of great price," he was not strictly alone. His sister Ann was with him, and received, at the same time, the unspeakable gift of God, as she has stated in her private diary. She says, "I knew that I must obtain forgiveness of sins by faith in Christ Jesus; and when I heard sermons on the nature of faith, I heard as for my life: but my diffident mind was long held in suspense. I found, however, that I must make an effort to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I was blessed in the deed; for, while my dear brother Robert and I unitedly wrestled with the Lord in prayer, we obtained power from on high, and peace and joy through believing, the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts. Each happy countenance indicated the inward heaven which we had in possession. We did indeed rejoice in God our Saviour." The day which to them was rendered thus memorable was February 26th, 1798.

Hence it is manifest, that the personal conversion of Robert Newton was thoroughly scriptural and strongly marked. It began with conviction of sin: that conviction produced "godly sorrow," bitter and agonizing. In this state he continued for several weeks, as miserable, as he often expressed himself at the time, as a man well can be who is not actually in perdition. As in the case of the Psalmist, "the pains of death and the sorrows of hell gat hold upon" him. He attended the means of grace; he wept, and cried earnestly to God; he requested the prayers of good men in his behalf; yet for a long time no deliver-

ance came. He was bound as with a chain of adamant, which no human power can ever dissolve: a dark cloud rested upon his spirit; and in vain did he seek relief by means of his own devising. "Before faith came," he was "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed." He felt himself to be powerless for all purposes of spiritual and moral good; and, in the bitterness of his grief, he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" In the anguish of his soul, he sometimes even expressed a desire to die, that he might know the worst of his case.

The day of liberty at length arrived. Under the guidance and aid of the Holy Spirit, he exercised an appropriating faith: of that faith Christ, as a sacrifice and a Saviour, was the object; and, in the very act of believing, the God of hope filled him with all joy and peace. The happiness which he then felt was too rich and permanent to be the effect of any merely natural cause. It was a "peace" which "passeth all understanding;" it was a "joy" that is "unspeakable, and full of glory;" and it remained with him to the end of life in undiminished freshness and elevation. From this time the bias of his nature was changed. The law of God was written upon his heart. He loved God, for he felt that God loved him. He abhorred sin, because it is hateful to God. He was free from the guilty "fear, which hath torment;" for the direct witness of his personal adoption enabled him, with unhesitating confidence, to cry, "Abba, Father." He had power over all sin; he delighted in acts of religious worship and of evangelical obedience; he loved the children of God for their heavenly Father's sake; and he loved

all mankind, as God's offspring, and the purchase of Christ's redeeming blood.

A conversion thus strongly marked, and scriptural in its character, is a blessing beyond all that words can express, at whatever period of human existence it may take place. It is a preparation for all the duties and trials of the present life, and it is no less a preparation for death and eternity. To every Christian, and especially to every Christian Minister, it is a mighty advantage, especially in seasons of temptation and discouragement, and even of spiritual declension, to remember the time when he indubitably "passed from death unto life;" and then confidently to say,—

"Surely on me my Father smiled,
And once I knew Thee reconciled,
And once I felt my sins forgiven!"

Luther's character as a Reformer was greatly affected by his religious experience. He had felt the sentence of death in his conscience, as a convicted transgressor of the moral law of God, and obtained effectual relief by a practical acquiescence in the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith; and hence his resolute fidelity in the maintenance of that great truth, in opposition to the unscriptural teaching of the Papal Church. This is equally true with respect to the two Wesleys and their friend Whitefield. And the painful mental process through which Robert Newton passed prepared him to sympathize with guilty men in all their misery; and the heavenly consolation which he obtained by faith in Christ impressed his mind with the efficacy of the atonement, and the perfect adaptation of the Gospel to the spiritual and moral wants of the world. In this manner he was trained to be what has been not unaptly called a "salvation Preacher."

No sooner had he tasted that the Lord is gracious, than he began to take an active part in the prayer-meetings which were held at Roxby and in its vicinity; and, under the constraining power of Divine love, which dwelt richly in his heart, he soon began, in those rustic assemblies, to call sinners to repentance, after the example of his brother Booth. He preached his first sermon in a cottage at Lyth, a village near Whitby. An aged man now living, who was present on the occasion, says, that the text which he selected as the foundation of his discourse was, "We preach Christ crucified;" a subject to which he adhered with unswerving fidelity to the end of his ministerial life. Upon the site of that cottage now stands a small Methodist chapel, the pulpit of which is placed over the very spot where the youthful evangelist, standing behind a chair, proclaimed salvation through the sacrificial blood of the cross.

Of his early efforts as a Preacher, Mr. Toase says: "At the very beginning he was popular and useful. Though young, his appearance was manly, and there was a noble bearing in all that he said and did. It was evident, even at that time, that he was intended to fill no ordinary place among the ambassadors of Christ. I was younger than he, and always looked up to him with admiration, and often followed him to places where he exercised his early ministry. He had not been long on the Preachers' Plan, before he was called to occupy the principal pulpits of the Circuit; and in all cases his labours were highly acceptable. O, those happy days! We were simple-minded and sincere. We loved as brethren, and were of one heart and soul, and thought no sacrifice too great for the advancement of the cause in which we had embarked."

CHAPTER II.

SOME men are so evidently designed by the providence of God to accomplish great purposes, that it is hardly possible, even in the early part of their lives, to mistake their destination. Such was Robert Newton, who was no sooner made a partaker of the Gospel salvation, than he began to recommend to others the mercy which he had received; and he had scarcely entered upon this new and sacred employment, before a general impression was made upon the minds of his hearers, that he would occupy an elevated position among the Ministers of Christ.

In the month of February, 1798, he was made happy in God; soon after this he began to preach, and his name was placed upon the Circuit Plan; and in the month of July, in the following year, he was recommended to the Methodist Conference, as a candidate for the itinerant ministry, accepted in that character, and appointed to the Pocklington Circuit, not having fully completed the nineteenth year of his age.

In those times a Travelling Preacher, generally speaking, was expected to be provided with a horse, and a pair of saddle-bags, in which he carried his Bible, and such other books as he might need, his shaving apparatus, and a change of linen. Before Robert left home, his father bought him a horse; and when the day of his departure arrived, considerable excitement prevailed, not only in the family, but among the neighbours. Ann Newton inscribed on the wall of her brother's room, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." He left

his home with the tears and blessings of many; his father's heart yearned over him, and he accompanied his son a few miles across the moors, and with a faltering voice at length took his leave, saying, "Preach repentance, faith, and holiness, my lad;" to which the young evangelist responded, "I will, father." They then parted; but before Robert had completed his journey across the moors, he dismounted, fell upon his knees on the ground, and earnestly invoked the blessing of God upon himself and his future labours.

In this spirit of zeal and self-sacrifice he met a physician, who was acquainted with the Newton family, and who, on learning the errand upon which Robert was bent, said, "You have mistaken your calling: a young man of your abilities should get into the medical or some other profession: you will never get anything among the Methodists. Return home, and do not throw yourself away." This was a view of Robert's project which, we need not hesitate to say, had never entered into his mind. He was intent upon winning souls to Christ, and was as indifferent to any other kind of "getting" as was an earlier servant of his Lord, who could say to the men in whose presence he had lived and acted for three years, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." What amount of these things Robert Newton might have been able to "get" in one of the professions that were recommended to him, we know not. As a Methodist Preacher, he had food and raiment, and such accommodation as his Master never had; and what he gained more will be best ascertained when "the dead, small and great," shall "stand before God" to be judged, and when the heavens and the earth shall pass away.

It was the custom with Methodist Preachers, in the times of which we are now speaking, when they took a journey of any considerable length, to deliver a sermon at the place where they happened to arrive in the evening, and to receive in return, from the friends who were resident there, a night's lodging, with accommodation for the horses that carried them. Robert, it would appear, was aware of this practice, and hoped to avail himself of it on his way to his first Circuit. Accordingly, on his arrival at Malton, the day being far spent, he inquired for a Methodist family; but instead of being invited to remain all night, as he expected, he was shown the road to Pocklington. Pursuing his way, he came to a village named Bythorpe, where he made the same inquiry, but with precisely the same result. He was again kindly shown the way to Pocklington. The night, however, was hastening on; he had never been accustomed to sleep at public-houses; and it is probable that the amount of cash at his immediate disposal was not very great. In this emergency he recollected that there was a Methodist farmer, of whom he had heard his father speak, whose residence he thought could not be far distant. He therefore inquired for Mr. Thomas, of Gallowgap, for that was the farmer's name; but when he arrived at the house, he learned that Mr. and Mrs. Thomas were gone to a meeting, at a place about a mile off, and were not expected to return in less than an hour or two. The young stranger was, however, kindly invited to dismount, and accommodation was offered both to him and his weary beast. He was, at first, mistaken for Mr. Booth Newton; and when this mistake was corrected, it was immediately said that he must be Mr. Booth Newton's brother; and as such he was

received. At length Mr. and Mrs. Thomas came home ; and having learned who and what the stranger was, they gave him a hearty welcome, and were so pleased with his appearance, his spirit, and his conversation, that Mr. Thomas accompanied him several miles on his journey the next morning ; and a cordial friendship was formed between the parties, which continued till the end of life. Mr. Thomas afterwards removed into the neighbourhood of Holbeach, in Lincolnshire, where some of his descendants now reside. They love the very name of Robert Newton, who was a welcome guest in their family for more than fifty years.

The writer of this narrative has a distinct remembrance of Mr. Newton (for so we must now call him) at the time of his entrance upon his evangelical labours in the Pocklington Circuit. He was tall, and well proportioned, possessing a fine open countenance, and was graceful in his appearance and action. His voice was a deep bass, of vast compass and power, and no less remarkable for the sweetness of its tones. He wore a white neckcloth, and a black coat and waistcoat ; but otherwise, like most of his brethren, he was not very clerical in his apparel. In preaching he was fluent and earnest, exhibiting a maturity of judgment beyond his years. His memory was tenacious ; and in his sermons he often introduced striking and appropriate quotations from the "Night Thoughts" of Dr. Young,—a book which he had evidently read with great advantage, and which at that time was very popular among young Methodists. In public prayer he was fervent, copious, and devout, expressing himself very much in the language of holy Scripture, with which he manifested a singular familiarity, considering his youth. His

ministry was popular, because it was impressive and edifying; and I well recollect that I once mingled with a group of pious villagers, who had come two miles to hear him on a Sunday afternoon, and were returning, full of admiration that a man so young should preach so well, when one of them emphatically said, "He will be a great man, if he only keep humble;" fearful, apparently, lest his fine person, voice, and talents, should prove a snare to him, by being an occasion of pride and vanity. In social intercourse he was frank, communicative, cheerful, and yet serious; and his entire demeanour was marked by strict propriety, so that he soon became a general favourite.

The Pocklington Circuit at that time included a large number of agricultural villages, some of which were situated upon bleak mountains, called "the Wolds," and others upon the extensive plain below, which stretches in the direction of Howden on one side, and of York on the other. In Pocklington, Market-Weighton, and one or two other places, the Societies and congregations were accommodated with chapels; but in the villages and hamlets generally, the religious services were conducted in private houses, in barns, and in carpenters' shops. During the winter months the Preacher took his stand behind a chair in the cottage of a day-labourer, or in the kitchen of a farm-house, at the end of a long oak-table, from which the servants were accustomed to take their meals.

The sermons delivered in these places were addressed to the consciences of the people, and invariably adapted and intended to expose the evil of sin, and the insufficiency of that religion which is merely outward; to direct awakened penitents to the Saviour; to show the nature of justification, the method of its attainment, the happiness and

the purity of heart which are directly consequent upon it ; the nature of the spiritual worship which God requires and will accept ; the duties of the Christian life, and the necessity of universal obedience on the part of all who know the Lord. These great subjects constituted, as they have ever done, the staple of Methodist preaching ; and practical attention to them all was enforced by solemn references to the near approaches of death, the certainty and strictness of the judgment, the joys of heaven, and the endless torments of hell.

On the week-day evenings the men usually appeared in their smock-frocks, and on the Sabbath-day in coats of a russet colour, with a red kerchief round their necks. The Methodist women were mostly seen in the villages with red cloaks and black silk bonnets, remarkable for their neatness and the absence of ornament. The sound of instrumental music was never heard in these rustic assemblies, and the use of a tune-book was unknown. The singing was perhaps not always scientifically correct, and such as would have thrown Handel into raptures of delight ; but it was lively and devotional. Any repetitions in the tunes were usually sung by the women alone ; and the man who offended against this regulation was almost sure to receive a rebuke from the Preacher, who felt that the entire service was under his immediate direction. Sometimes the farmers' labourers, who rose early in the morning, and worked hard through the day, found it difficult to avoid drowsiness under a sermon, especially if it were somewhat heavy, or of immoderate length ; and in such cases the Preacher seldom hesitated to request some one to awake the sleeper. I well remember an honest man of this class, who voluntarily closed his eyes, that he might hear the sermon with undistracted attention ; and,

hearing the Preacher say, "Some one of you, have the kindness to awaken that good man," opened his eyes, and said, "I am not asleep, Sir; I am listening to all that you say." Mr. Newton, being a young man, was not wont to take these liberties with his hearers, and his preaching was such as to command fixed and general attention.

The Superintendent of the Pocklington Circuit, under whose care Mr. Newton was placed during the first year of his public ministerial labour, was the Rev. Thomas Dixon, an aged man, nearly worn out in the service of his Lord. He was somewhat unwieldy in his person, slow of speech, and otherwise unattractive as a Preacher; but he was eminently sensible and devout, spiritually-minded, well-informed, and of strict integrity. A vain young man, in Mr. Newton's situation, would have admired his own popularity, and despised the veteran Minister whose infirmities required forbearance, and would perhaps have headed a party against him. But nobler thoughts and feelings occupied the mind of Mr. Newton. He formed a just estimate of his Superintendent's intellectual and moral worth, and revered him as a father. From this venerable man he learned much as to the economy and administration of Methodism, and received from his lips many lessons of truth and wisdom which he never forgot. To the end of his life he was accustomed to speak of Mr. Dixon with affection and esteem.

Yet, while he was in the main happy in his work, and was borne along by an uninterrupted tide of popular favour, he was at times subject to distressing temptations in respect of the service in which he was engaged, and of his comparative want of suitable qualifications for it.

Feelings of discouragement rose in his mind ; and at times he entertained the purpose of leaving his Circuit, and of returning to his former occupation at Roxby. On one occasion he mentioned these feelings to John Hart, of Thornton, a pious, thoughtful Local Preacher, in whose cottage Mr. Newton and his fellow-labourers used to preach and lodge. John, who was himself no stranger to such emotions, heard the young man with patience, answered his objections, gave him suitable encouragement, and ended the matter by saying, in respect of the proposed abandonment of his work, "YOU DARE NOT." And such was the fact.

After the Conference of 1800, Mr. Newton took leave of his venerated Superintendent, and of the friends to whom he had faithfully ministered the word of God during the preceding twelve months, and repaired to the Howden Circuit, to which he was appointed. It would have been impossible to find a station that was more exactly suited to his state and character. He possessed talents of a high order ; but they were not fully called forth ; nor was he aware of the improvement of which they were capable. But his mind was generous, and ready to surrender itself to the beneficial influences which were now brought to bear upon it. His Superintendent was the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, a man of real genius, of admirable simplicity, of great mental activity, of a most kindly disposition, of literary habits, and thoroughly devoted to his work as a Methodist Preacher. It was impossible that a person of Mr. Newton's character should be brought into direct and official intercourse with such a Minister without deriving from him great intellectual and spiritual benefit.

The Howden Circuit at that time was of wide extent,

embracing in its range a large number of country villages; in many of which chapels of various dimensions were erected, not remarkable in every instance for their architectural beauty; but they were neat and convenient, and the religious services which were held in them were of inestimable benefit to multitudes of people, who would otherwise have lived and died in a comparatively heathen state. In these villages there were many families of high respectability, who not only attended the Methodist ministry, but belonged to the Societies; and, what is still more important, they enjoyed the salvation which that ministry is intended to expound, and were the subjects of that spiritual religion which the Methodist discipline is designed to conserve and foster. The heads of these families were wealthy farmers; and not a few of them were energetic and effective Local Preachers, who were accustomed, on the morning of the Lord's day, to take their horses, visit two or three villages or hamlets, preach the truth of God in strains which it "was a privilege to hear," and return in the evening gladdened by the Gospel which they had delivered, and by the heavenly influence which rested upon them.

These men were well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, were somewhat extensively read in divinity, and therefore competent judges of good preaching, both as to matter and manner; so that to meet their just expectations required constant effort. Of this Mr. Newton was aware; and while their approval of his ministry was to him a source of encouragement, it was no less a powerful stimulus to diligence in his pulpit-preparations, and to a godly fervour and earnestness in his public labours. The generous hospitality of the wealthy friends in the Circuit

was to him no snare. His moderation was known unto all men; he grew in grace; his pious zeal knew no languor; and perhaps no man ever made a more marked and sensible improvement in theological knowledge, and in the power of expounding the great principles of revealed truth, so as to instruct and impress his congregations, than he did at this period of his life. His preaching retained an undiminished freshness and popularity. He proposed to himself a high standard of Christian and ministerial excellence, and spared no pains to realize all that his heart desired. As if he had foreknown that the time was hastening on when almost every day would be occupied in public service, he was, in these earlier years of his ministry, indefatigable in his application to study, especially with a direct reference to the duties of the pulpit, in which he was most anxious to excel. He was "diligent in prayers, and in reading of the holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh."

During his residence in the Howden Circuit, he entered upon the study of the French language; in the knowledge of which his Superintendent had attained to a proficiency, and was then engaged in translating into English Professor Ostervald's treatise on the "Exercise of the Christian Ministry." Mr. Newton doubtless hoped to form an acquaintance with the published sermons of the most distinguished of the French Preachers, whose fame at that time was loudly proclaimed by the English press.*

* Among the French Protestant Preachers, Saurin takes the lead. His sermons are orthodox, eloquent, argumentative, and contain many faithful and awful warnings addressed to the consciences of ungodly men; but they present very defective views of the office and work of the Holy Spirit under

Of his preaching and personal appearance at this time, the Rev. Barnabas Shaw, now an aged Missionary in South Africa, gives the following account, in a private letter, which bears the date of July 10th, 1854, and was addressed to Dr. Beecham:—"When I was about thirteen years of age, I heard Mr. Newton preach a funeral sermon in the old Presbyterian chapel, South Cave, which was perhaps never so well warmed either before or since. South Cave, and Elloughton my native place, were then in the Howden Circuit. Though a mere boy, I felt proud

the evangelical economy; they fail to point out, with clearness and force, the manner in which the benefits of Christ's redemption are to be sought and obtained by those who feel their guilt and sin; and, at the same time, they are often offensively pompous in their manner.

As to the sermons of the principal French Preachers belonging to the Papal communion, they are finished specimens of what genius and art can produce. In their matter and substance, they are moral essays, in which the vanity of worldly pleasure, and the evil of particular vices, are exposed, and religious duty is enforced by the solemnities of death and judgment. But they do not embody the truths of THE GOSPEL which our Saviour sent His Apostles to preach. It is reported of Massillon, one of the most distinguished of this class of orators, that he once gave in the pulpit such a graphic description of the day of judgment, that his hearers all rose from their seats, imagining that the judgment had already begun. This feat has often been referred to as the triumph of pulpit-eloquence; but was it not rather the triumph of histrionic art? The true end of preaching is the salvation of the people. The Parisians, who were so affected under the oratory of Massillon, only rose from their seats to sit down again. They were not shown the way to Christ as their Saviour, that they might be prepared to meet Him as their Judge, and stand before Him with boldness and joy. Nothing but THE GOSPEL, the complete GOSPEL, meets the wants of fallen men; and the sermons which do not contain this, whether delivered from the pulpit or the press, are of comparatively little value as to the great design of preaching. Of this fact no man had a deeper conviction than Robert Newton, when age, experience, observation, and prayer had matured his judgment.

of the Preacher, and thought him one of the finest-looking men I ever saw. His voice charmed me exceedingly. He preached also, I remember, in the barn of Mr. Thompson, of Armin, who at that time was a gay and thoughtless man; but heard as for eternity, and became a man of decided piety. He soon ranked with the first-rate Local Preachers in that Circuit,—the Bells of Portington, the Simpsons of Spaldington, the Clarksons of Holme, the Lavaracks of Swinefleet, and others. Mr. Thompson was one of the best Christians I ever knew; one of the kindest men in the universe; and one of the most useful in his local sphere of labour. He would ride in the depth of winter, through rain and hail and snow, to attend his appointment at any small village, with the greatest delight; and his labours were not in vain.” Mr. Shaw might have mentioned many other honoured names of parties who were at that time connected with Methodism in the Howden Circuit, especially the Blanshards of Cavil-Hall, and the Woods of North Cave.

Some further notice of a man so distinguished as Mr. Thompson is requisite in this place. He was, in respect of piety and usefulness, all that Mr. Shaw has described him; but Mr. Newton was not the only instrument of his conversion. Two ladies in the Howden Circuit, who had been turned to God by means of Mr. Newton’s preaching, were deeply concerned for the people of Armin, whose spiritual interests were greatly neglected. They requested Mr. Newton to preach there, and obtained the promise of a barn to be used on the occasion; but when the appointed time arrived, the barn was refused. The case was stated to Mr. Thompson, who was then an ungodly and thoughtless young man; and he instantly offered the use of his

barn for the service, and directed his men to prepare it with all haste. Mr. Newton preached. Mr. Thompson attended, heard the truth, and was deeply impressed by it, but did not at once receive Christ as his Saviour. When Mr. Newton left the Circuit, he was succeeded by the Rev. John Brown, a young man of extraordinary zeal and energy, who introduced regular preaching into Armin, formed a Society there, and was a means of leading Mr. Thompson to Christ, by whose grace the man of worldliness and gaiety was made a new creature, and an active agent in the Christian cause. Mr. Brown was likely to become a man of leading influence in the Methodist Connexion; but, by a mysterious providence, he died at an early period of his public labours, so that his brilliant career was of short duration. A friendship, tender and permanent, was formed between Mr. Thompson and Mr. Newton; who was accustomed to visit Armin from year to year, and witnessed in that small village such liberality in the cause of Missions as was scarcely ever surpassed.

Mr. Newton's ministry and character were so highly appreciated in the Howden Circuit, as well as those of his esteemed Superintendent, that the Conference was induced to appoint them both to that station a third year. Mr. Wesley had made provision for triennial appointments, in the powers which he conferred upon the Conference; yet they were then regarded with jealousy, so that they but seldom took place. The appointment of so young a man to remain a third year in the same Circuit was therefore not looked upon as a special favour to him, but rather as a proof of talent, and of excellent conduct on his part, which had won the esteem and confidence of the people. The fact is, that respect for his memory has from that time

been hereditary in the Howden Circuit. Parents have spoken to their children of his preaching, his spirit, his usefulness, so as to induce them to love his very name; and this feeling has been kept up by his frequent visits as long as he lived. Although half a century has elapsed since he left that field of labour, and the people who knew and loved him have mostly passed away, the people in general still speak of him as an example of all that is honourable, blameless, and praiseworthy.

Soon after the commencement of his third year in the Howden Circuit, Mr. Newton entered into the marriage relation. The object of his choice was the daughter of the late Captain Nodes, of the Seventeenth Infantry, who lived with her mother, then a widow, at Skelton Hall, near York. Miss Nodes had been awakened to a concern for her salvation, under the ministry of a pious Clergyman of the Church of England, of which she was a member. The opposition which she encountered in consequence of the sudden change in her religious views was the occasion of her first meeting with Mr. Newton. She afterwards invited him to preach in the village school-room at Skelton; and their engagement was the result of this second interview. Their marriage at this time, 1802, before he had completed the usual term of ministerial probation, was sanctioned by the Conference; and the Superintendent Minister of the York Circuit acted as father at the nuptial ceremony. Of this union it may be truly said, that it was founded in mutual esteem and affection, and that the parties were worthy of each other. It may serve to show something of his devotedness to his ministerial work, when we say, that on every week-day in the month, except one, he had a preaching appointment; that he selected the vacant day for

his marriage, so that no congregation, however small, should be disappointed of his service; and that, in the evening of the following day, he preached in a country village, his bride being one of his hearers.

It has been often observed, that perhaps a finer couple, personally considered, never presented themselves in a Christian sanctuary for the purpose of entering into that holy and honourable relation. But it is of greater importance to observe that their marriage union was eminently sanctified. They immediately adopted the practice of retiring twice a day to pray with and for each other; and, whenever they had the opportunity, this was their habit to the end of life. After this statement, it is needless to add, that their union was blessed of the Lord, and was singularly happy. When he had become an aged man, he was heard to say, "In the course of a short time my wife and I shall celebrate the jubilee of our marriage; and I know not that, during the fifty years of our union, an unkind look or an unkind word has ever passed between us." Through the whole of her married life, Mrs. Newton's habits have been retiring, and she has occupied but a small degree of public attention; but it will appear from the subsequent parts of this narrative, that the many thousands of people who have profited by the ministry of her husband owe a large debt of gratitude to her magnanimity and self-denial, in giving up the society of such a man, and in taking upon herself the care of their large family, thus leaving him at liberty to extend his labours to the three kingdoms, and the benefit of them to the ends of the earth.

A few brief extracts from the letters which he wrote to his sister Ann, while he was in the Howden Circuit, will serve further to illustrate his character at this period of his

life. Mary was married about this time, and went to reside at Robin Hood's Bay. Ann, who was nearer his own age, still remained with her father and mother at Roxby; so that in writing to her he was, in fact, writing to his parents.

“Nov. 17th, 1800.—We are separated far from each other, but daily meet at the throne of grace; and we know that ‘the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.’ I hope, my dear sister, that you are more than ever athirst for God, even for the living God. Let us come to the Fountain of living water, in the act of prayer and faith; so shall we enjoy more of the inconceivable felicity which results from an intimate union with the adorable Jesus. He is our peace. Let us lose ourselves in the boundless ocean of redeeming love.

“I preached in Howden yesterday, at noon and night, to very large auditories. The principal persons in the town attend. We have had some conversions, but I hope they are only drops before the shower. I see that I have more need than ever I had before to pray for true humility and evangelical simplicity. Give my kind love to my dear parents, brothers, and all friends.”

“Dec. 6th, 1801.—I hope you are yet running with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus. He is a perfect example. Let us copy after the moral perfections of His nature, so far as we are capable of such imitation. I see more and more the value of true religion: her ways are indeed ways of pleasantness. I bless the God of my life for many mercies; I enjoy a good state of health, and solid peace of mind.

“Our congregations continue to be as large as they ever were; but I am sometimes afraid that our hearers are

more pleased than profited. The Rev. Dr. Coke is to officiate for me here the next Lord's day, when I hope to be instructed and edified. I have not heard any person preach since I heard my brother in your house. I had a letter lately from my brother Booth, who is well. May we all be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light! God bless you!"

"April 13th, 1802.—We had our Quarterly Meeting last week, when my good colleague and I both consented to continue another year in the Circuit, if the Conference be agreeable. I came to Howden the next morning, and perceived that I had caught the measles, and was soon obliged to take to my bed, being continually sick. The case was of a complex kind, owing to my being in the cold after I had taken the infection. Two doctors attended me, both of whom were alarmed. One of them told me that I had every symptom of putridity. A large blister was put upon my breast, which, when dressed, discharged about half a pint. Through the abundant mercy of God I am now getting better; and I hope that I can realize not only the hand, but the love, of my Redeemer in this dispensation. My afflictions have enabled me to form such an estimate of the world as I never formed before. May you and I build above the skies!

"We have a glorious revival in our Circuit. I joined twelve or fourteen new members to the Society the last time that I preached at Bubwith, one of our Sunday places. Zion's converts are many; and our congregations are so large, that I frequently think we shall have to go without the camp.

"I hope our brothers Jacob and John continue steadfast in faith and holy practice. We have need to watch

and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man. What an honour it will be to stand approved in the sight of assembled worlds! Give my kind love to my dear parents, brothers, and friends."

"May 19th.—You desire me to write soon. I feel a pleasure in complying with your request. It will add to my felicity if I can heighten yours. How agreeable it would have been to me, could I have had my dear sister to attend me in my affliction! but the best of all is, that the Lord was with me, and I am now perfectly recovered. I have indeed found it good to be afflicted, and I am thankful for the chastening of the Lord.

"I am glad to hear that the supplanter* is become a Preacher. Who knows what the Lord intends him to do? I hope he is a chosen vessel, destined to publish the excellencies of the Redeemer, and make known to the world that love which angels would be honoured in proclaiming. When God bestows a gift, He also gives a call. 'Occupy till I come.' O, how I should like to hear him! Tell him to pray much, and to digest all the sermons that he hears. I have mentioned the circumstance of his beginning to preach at different places; and the good ladies have generally exclaimed, 'What a happy woman must your mother be!'

"We have had a blessed revival of religion at two or three places in this Circuit. Many have been converted, who continue to adorn the Gospel by the holiness of their lives. Several of the friends say it will be a sin for me to leave the Circuit at the next Conference. I want only to

* His brother Jacob.

be in the way of duty ; but I hope I shall never forget the kindness of my friends in this Circuit."

"Nov. 2d.—Blessed be God, the number of them that believe is multiplied. We have lately joined seven or eight new members to the Society at North Cave, where I was the last Lord's day. Our places of worship are too small. Sinners flock to hear the word. They fly as a cloud, and as doves to the windows. The longer I stay, the more I am united to the people here. O that we all at last may meet where parting and pain have no existence !

"My wife and I are both well, and I trust are striving together for the faith of the Gospel. We are together journeying to the place of which the Lord hath said, 'I will give it you.'"

"Jan. 5th, 1803.—When I received your first letter, containing the mournful news of my father's indisposition, my dear wife had just begun to be ill of a fever, which for some time has been very prevalent in this neighbourhood ; otherwise we should have set off for Roxby immediately. After a week had elapsed, I was taken ill of the same fever, which in a few days reduced me almost to a skeleton ; but, through the mercy of God, we are now restored. Our gracious Lord afflicts not for His pleasure, but for our profit. May the end of all His dispensations towards us be fully answered ! It is good for us frequently to think of our mortality ; for 'we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.'

"It is matter of great consolation to hear that religion afforded my dear father such support in the trying hour.

'Virtue alone hath majesty in death.'

“If we be spared until March, perhaps my brother Jacob may be able to take my Circuit for a few weeks, which will give me an opportunity of visiting you. I hear that John speaks with all boldness.

“The Lord, I hope, is prospering His work among us. Our congregations are as large as ever, and we are adding a few to the Societies. I labour among affectionate friends, and am blessed with every earthly comfort. ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul!’”

CHAPTER III.

THE Wesleyan Conference of 1803 was held in Manchester; and Mr. Newton, having passed acceptably through the four years of his probation, took an affectionate leave of his friends in the Howden Circuit,—among whom were many of his spiritual children,—and repaired to that assembly, for the purpose of giving the requisite proofs of his piety and soundness in the faith, and of being solemnly set apart for the pastoral office. Here he was introduced to the body of Ministers with whom he was to be permanently identified in carrying on the great work of God, which was begun in the time of the Wesleys, and was in a state of rapid extension both at home and abroad. Here were many of Mr. Wesley's contemporaries, tried friends of Methodism, eminent for their wisdom and fidelity; and here were young men, like himself, just rising into public life, anxious to learn the true nature of their calling, and burning with zeal for the honour of Christ, and the salvation of redeemed men. Here, too, were men of whom he had often heard, famous for their attainments in sacred scholarship, or for their abilities as extempore Preachers. At the head of these men, at that time, was the venerable Joseph Benson, a man who was "mighty in the Scriptures," and no less mighty in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. His sermons were long, richly charged with important truth, and addressed with irresistible effect to the understandings and consciences of the people; so that, in despite of his feeble and harsh voice, he was one of the most successful Preachers of his

day. Next came Mr. Adam Clarke, not yet honoured with a Doctor's degree, who had begun to attract attention by his varied learning, who then took his full share of labour as a Methodist Preacher, and whose ministry was equally remarkable for its argumentative character, its simplicity, and its power. Here was also the generous and noble-minded Samuel Bradburn, whose ability as a public speaker was all but unrivalled. He had a fine countenance, an agreeable voice, which he well knew how to manage; his manner in the pulpit was simple and unimpassioned; but his command over his congregations was surprising. He could provoke their smiles, or move them to tears, at pleasure. His sermons were rich in evangelical sentiment; for he delighted to expatiate upon the glories of Christ's person, and the efficacy of His atonement. Of these and kindred subjects he was never weary; and he was accustomed to descant upon them in strains of the happiest eloquence. Yet he often marred his incomparable discourses by witticisms, which to some extent spoiled their effect. His fame, as a Preacher, was nevertheless spread, and that justly, far and wide.

Dr. Coke was also a man of leading influence in the Conference, and in the Connexion generally. He was short in stature, rather corpulent, of a fair and ruddy complexion, quick in his spirit and movements; and, although a Clergyman of the Church of England, he was hearty in his attachment to Methodism, and superintended its Missions with a disinterestedness and fidelity which cannot be too greatly admired. In Missionary zeal he was far in advance of the age in which he lived.

The chair of the Conference this year was occupied by Joseph Bradford, the chosen friend and travelling com-

panion of Mr. Wesley, a man of unbending integrity, and of kindly disposition. He was surrounded by a goodly array of faithful men, who had long borne the burden and heat of the day; such as Joseph and Thomas Taylor, Pawson, Moore, Barber, Atmore, Gaulter, Griffith, and many others less distinguished, but of exemplary self-denial and fidelity, from the agricultural districts, from Cornwall and Wales, whose sunburnt countenances indicated their extensive journeyings, while bearing the message of salvation to masses of people who, but for them, must have perished for lack of knowledge.

Before this body of Ministers Mr. Newton bore an acceptable testimony as to his views of Divine truth, his experience of its power, and his purpose in respect of the system of doctrine and discipline which the Founder of the Connexion had committed in trust to his sons in the Gospel; from them he received the right hand of fellowship, as a fellow-labourer; and by them was he commended to the care and blessing of God in earnest and united prayer. That Conference was memorable for the reception of gifted men into the Wesleyan ministry; among whom are to be ranked, not only Robert Newton, but Jabez Bunting, Daniel Isaac, James Needham, William Leach, William Edward Miller, Philip Garrett, John Slack, Joseph Hallam, Thomas Pinder, all of whom became men of renown, though not in an equal degree. Of these valuable and useful Ministers, one only remains. The rest are fallen asleep; but their names command an undying respect. With such examples before him, we can easily conceive that the generous soul of Robert Newton was stirred to its very depths, and that he was prompted to an honourable and godly emulation of so much talent and

excellence. To him it was also an occasion of solid gratification, that, while he was himself fully set apart to the sacred office, his brother Jacob was accepted as a candidate for the same high and holy calling, and appointed to the Ripon Circuit; and that their younger brother John was usefully employed as a Local Preacher.

When the Conference had concluded its sittings, Mr. and Mrs. Newton, accompanied by a faithful servant named Nanny, who had been brought to the enjoyment of God's mercy in Christ through her master's faithful preaching, and whose heart therefore clave to them with a grateful affection, entered upon their journey to the Glasgow Circuit, where he was appointed to labour during the next twelve months. The superintendence of the Circuit was intrusted to him; and Messrs. William Timperley and John Fisher were his colleagues. Having paid a visit to Mrs. Newton's mother on their way, at Skelton, they at length arrived at the place of their destination, where scenes were presented to them very different from those which they had been accustomed to witness in Yorkshire. They were no longer resident in a quiet provincial town, surrounded by agricultural villages, but in a manufacturing city, of vast extent, teeming with inhabitants, many of the poorer classes being without shoes and stockings; and not a few of the female servants in respectable families in the same plight. They found, also, an Established Church, with its Clergy, its numerous places of worship, and these attended by crowds of people; but no surplice, and no Liturgy, the Ministers officiating in their gowns, and using extempore prayer, and the people admirers of good preaching.

Mr. Newton arrived in Glasgow on the Saturday, and was to preach there the next morning. He was given to

understand, that he would be expected to appear in the pulpit with his gown and bands,—appendages to which he had hitherto been unaccustomed. At that time he dispensed with the gown: but the bands were deemed necessary; for he would otherwise be regarded as a mere Licentiate, permitted to exercise his gifts, by way of trial, but not yet invested with the ministerial character. A pair of bands was therefore borrowed for the occasion of a neighbouring Clergyman; and in the course of the following week Mrs. Newton exercised her skill in providing him with a pair of his own. The fluent, earnest, energetic, and thoroughly evangelical sermons of Mr. Newton soon engaged the public attention; and the chapel was crowded with people,—a fact which gave promise of much spiritual good, though the congregations, unlike those which he had been accustomed to address in Yorkshire, however deeply they might feel, appeared to be calm and unmoved. Yet their earnest attention proved that they understood and felt the truths which were delivered to them in the name of the Lord.

Mr. Newton's appointment to the Glasgow Circuit, at this period of his life, was equally important to himself, to the congregations whom he was accustomed to address, and to the entire Wesleyan body. It was here, especially, that he was prepared for those extraordinary public services which were assigned to him, in the arrangements of Divine Providence, in future life. Here he often preached to the same people five or six times a week; so that he was compelled to study revealed truth upon a somewhat extended scale, that he might be able to produce, in the course of his ministry, "things new and old." It is also well known, that, in Scotland, preaching, as an art, has been studied

with extraordinary assiduity and success; so that her pulpits have, from time to time, been occupied by several of the best Preachers in Christendom. In Glasgow, Mr. Newton had an opportunity, almost every week, of hearing the ablest Ministers in the city, who preached in each other's churches. Among the eminent men with whose services the city was then favoured were the celebrated Dr. Balfour, and Dr. Wardlaw, who was rising into notice, both as a theologian and a preacher. The ministrations of these very able men Mr. Newton especially admired. He was, indeed, an imitator of no man; but the exercise of their eminent talents, of which he was an admiring witness, unquestionably stimulated him to a diligent improvement of his own. In addition to this, he availed himself of the opportunity then afforded him of attending the lectures of Professors in the University on Divinity and Philosophy, by which his knowledge was enlarged, and he was taught to prosecute his own studies in a systematic and successful manner; for he had a quick apprehension, and acquired information with great facility. He could attend the lectures which have been just named without assuming the garb of a mere student, and therefore without dishonouring the office which he sustained as a Minister and Pastor.

The Glasgow Circuit, at this time, included the towns of Stirling and Ayr. At each of these places one of Mr. Newton's colleagues resided; and with them he was accustomed to exchange pulpits once a month. When his turn came to visit Stirling, and to spend some time there, he was accompanied by Mrs. Newton. It was winter; and the snow hanging on the trees, and resting on the sides of the hills, as they passed along, was as chilling as the prospect which lay before them; the cause of Methodism

in the town being in such a declining state, that it was resolved, if the present attempt to revive it did not succeed, the preaching should be withdrawn. On their arrival, the youthful couple took possession of the single Minister's single room, which answered the purpose of a parlour, a bed-room, and a dressing-room. Sunday morning came; and Mr. Newton, putting on his gown as well as his bands, was reported to be "a college-bred man," and found himself attended by a crowded congregation. His talents as a public speaker became a subject of general conversation; and on the next Sabbath-day more people attended than the chapel could contain. Of course, Stirling retained its position as a Methodist station.

The time at length arrived for Mr. Newton to visit the town of Ayr, where the cause was in a state of prosperity under the zealous labours of Mr. Fisher; and this so cheered the Superintendent and his wife, who still accompanied him, that they were more than reconciled to their humble accommodation, which, as in the case of Stirling, was very different from that which was provided for them in the mansions of the wealthy farmers in the Howden Circuit. Their home in Ayr was the house of a poor woman, named Tebby Neale, where they sat down to such fare as their kind and thrifty hostess could provide out of the young man's allowance of three shillings and sixpence a week; having left their Glasgow income of one guinea per week for Nanny and Mr. Fisher. In this humble dwelling Mr. Newton looked rather anxiously at his wife, in a small room, the walls adorned with a map of Jerusalem and an engraving of the crucifixion, and the table presenting both plain and scanty fare; but her heart, as well as his own, was gladdened by a sense

of the Redeemer's love; and both rejoiced, after the Saviour's example, to associate with the pious poor, and unite with them in acts of spiritual worship.

In the mean while, the cause of religion advanced throughout the Circuit. It was a time of war; the country was threatened with invasion; general alarm prevailed; earnest prayer was every where offered to God for His merciful interposition; and many of the soldiers flocked to the Methodist chapels, aware that their opportunities for hearing the word of life were of uncertain continuance, and therefore ought to be carefully improved.

At the return of spring, in the year 1804, Mr. Newton again went to spend some time in Stirling, where his reputation stood so high, that the chapel could not accommodate the crowds who wished to press into it. In this emergency, the Magistrates, of their own accord, offered him the use of the Town-Hall; and so highly was his ministry in that place appreciated, that several gentlemen proposed to him, that, in case he would renounce his connexion with the Wesleyan body, and adopt the system of Congregational Independency, they would erect for him a commodious chapel, place themselves under his pastoral care, and secure to him in perpetuity a liberal salary. This handsome proposal he, of course, respectfully declined; choosing rather to live and die among his own people, of whose theology and ecclesiastical order he approved in his inmost soul, and the benefits of which he had both felt in himself and witnessed in many others. We can have no hesitation in saying, that in this case he judged wisely, although he could not at that time have any apprehension of the wide sphere of labour which he was called to occupy in the subsequent years of his life.

When Mr. Newton occupied the Town-Hall of Stirling, people of every grade and class, including the military, both privates and officers, attended his ministry; and some of the warm-hearted Irish found it difficult so far to place their feelings under restraint, as to maintain the stillness and decorum of a Scottish assembly in the house of God. One poor soldier from the Emerald Isle was so impressed under the word, as to utter a deep sigh; when a Scottish lady, unaccustomed to such a sound in a place of worship, said to Mrs. Newton, who was sitting by her side, "What is that? Is it a dog?"

It is well known that the scenery around Stirling is romantic and beautiful in a high degree, and that the interest of the neighbourhood is greatly enhanced by its ancient castle, which stands upon a rocky eminence. During their transitory residence in this place, Mr. and Mrs. Newton often walked abroad to enjoy the refreshing breezes, and to gaze upon the works of nature and the remains of antiquity. One day, while she sat upon a stile, taking a sketch of the castle, and he was sketching the outline of a sermon, the soldiers before them exercising the arts of war, such was the feverish state of public feeling, that suspicion fell upon them, as persons who might be in league with the French, and were preparing plans and surveys for the use of the enemy. Glasses were therefore called into requisition, both in the castle and among the military; and the movements of the strangers were strictly observed. Mr. Newton's appearance in the pulpit on the Sabbath allayed all suspicion, so far as he was concerned; but Mrs. Newton, with her sketch-book and her pencil, was once or twice watched to her home by officers, who seemed to think that

their duty required them to ascertain who and what she was.

During his stay at Stirling, Mr. Newton's fame as a Preacher spread far and wide in the surrounding country; and many were the invitations which he received to minister the Gospel of peace in distant localities. As he always delighted in the service of his great Master, he was not unwilling to listen to these calls, when opportunity served; and one of his visits to a company of godly peasants in North Britain may serve as a specimen of many more. Accompanied by Mrs. Newton, he left his temporary home at Stirling, and a walk of about seven miles brought them to the house from which a friendly invitation had issued, where they found tea provided for them. They then went to a sombre-looking chapel, which was well filled with quiet people, who heard the word with fixed attention, and at the close of the service requested another visit from the Preacher, and a similar sermon, as soon as possible. The family then assembled for prayer, after which the supper was prepared. It consisted of about a gallon of milk-porridge, which was served up in a fine large bowl; the entire party being supplied with spoons made of horn. No one suspected that the Minister and his lady would be so fastidious as to expect separate vessels for themselves; so that every one stretched out his arm and his spoon to the common supply. The strangers were then accommodated with a comfortable bed in the dairy. The next morning, having taken breakfast with the friendly folk in their own way, Mr. and Mrs. Newton returned to Stirling, highly gratified with the view which they had obtained of godliness, hospitality, and domestic manners in a Scottish village.

The following brief extracts from two letters which Mr. Newton sent from Glasgow to his devout and intelligent sister Ann, who was his favourite correspondent, will serve further to exhibit his spirit and circumstances at this period of his life:—

“Dec. 5th, 1803.—To hear of the welfare of my dear relations always affords me pleasure; and the more so in the present instance, because I was anxious about my father’s health. How gladly would we have visited you before we left England, had it been practicable! We are now scattered abroad; yet I trust we are all in the same fold, under the care of the same Shepherd.

“We have many privileges here which we cannot have in England. I hear all the Divines in the city, belonging to the Established Kirk, who preach alternately every Thursday. I hear theological lectures in the Temple on Monday evenings, and attend a course of philosophical lectures during the whole term. I desire and pray that my improvement may correspond with my advantages, and trust that my desire for intellectual improvement does not diminish my desire for more of the mind that was in Christ Jesus. I daily feel that nothing can give real comfort without Christ *in me* the hope of glory. I long for a greater conformity to the image of my Lord.

“An outward profession of religion is fashionable in this country; but I fear only a few know anything of the Holy Spirit’s work in the heart. Here the congregation continues to increase. This day I believe it is advertised for me to preach a charity-sermon next Sunday; and this is the second time I have been called to preach on such occasions. We are at present in good health, although I have often been unwell since I came here.

“My dear wife unites with me in sincere regards to our parents, and to you all.”

“March 5th, 1804.—How good is the Lord! May our souls and bodies concur in the expression of His praise! I hope the work of God continues to prosper in and about you, and that the little cloud increases more and more. Truly nothing is too hard for the Lord. I had almost given up all hope of good at Roxby; but ‘His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.’ How pleasing it is to hear of genuine conversions! This is the grand end of all our private studies and public ministrations. O that we may never lose sight of this end! Conversions in this country are rare; yet there are those who experience the truth of our Lord’s words, ‘In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.’

“I spent about a month lately at Stirling, where my health was very much improved, in compliance with the unexpected offer, by the Magistrates, of the Council Chamber to preach in, gratis. I am to return, and spend a few more Sabbaths with them. If any good be done, it will be well; but the people here would be wise above what is written. Whiskey and snuff are the bane of this country. The congregations in this city continue to increase; and hence the collections at the chapel-door are considerable. I preach five or six times to the same people every week, and it is usual to continue about two hours at every service. I hear of some who are getting spiritual good, and we are adding a few members all along; but the people are so excessively backward in speaking on the subject of religious experience, that, if they receive good, they are afraid to acknowledge it. ‘Keep it to yourself,’ is the

general maxim of the wicked one; for no man lighteth a candle to put it under a bushel. Before their conversion, people do not keep their ungodliness to themselves.

“The friends here almost insist upon it, that I shall remain with them another year; but, as Glasgow does not agree with my health, I think I shall remove, although I have many advantages here which I cannot expect elsewhere. Thy will, O Lord, be done!

“April 8th will be the general sacrament here, when we shall have strangers from all the region round about. I hope John goes on well, redeeming the time.”

It will be observed that Mr. Newton here speaks of the failure of his health, and of his purpose to leave the Circuit at the ensuing Conference. The fact is, the sedentary life which he was compelled to lead, especially in Glasgow, where his time was mostly spent, agreed neither with his mental nor his bodily constitution. He was formed for active service, in body as well as in mind, and could not bear habitual confinement within doors. In Glasgow he was afflicted with indigestion, and such derangement of the biliary organs as produced distressing sickness. The fact is, he was overworked, studying day and night, and attending college-lectures, which required much thought. He therefore determined, when his year at Glasgow was ended, to request of the Conference an appointment to an English Circuit, where he would be in reality what he was in name,—a *Travelling* Preacher.

The Conference of this year was held in London; and Mr. Newton, accompanied by his wife, repaired thither to attend its sittings, and was again deeply interested in the business which came before that assembly of his fathers and brethren in the Gospel, and no less in the sermons

which were delivered on that occasion. At this Conference a considerable number of young men were admitted on trial, as candidates for the ministry, and among the rest Mr. John Newton, the youngest brother of Robert: so that Mr. and Mrs. Newton, of Roxby, had four sons in the Wesleyan ministry; two of whom, Booth and Robert, had already acquired considerable celebrity by their talents and usefulness, and the other two, Jacob and John, were also men of high promise. Jacob, like his elder brothers, Booth and Robert, was tall, robust, and well-proportioned, with a strong manly voice, but of fair complexion. John was not so tall as any of his three brothers. He had a voice much resembling theirs, but of less power. He possessed good and useful talents as a Preacher, and commanded a considerable degree of respect and esteem in the various stations which he occupied in the Wesleyan body.

After his return from Scotland, Mr. Newton received an indirect rebuke, for which he was perhaps not prepared. Mrs. Newton was in a somewhat large company of Wesleyan Ministers and friends in London, when Mr. Benson, not being aware of the facts of Mr. Newton's case, nor of his wife's presence, said, in a tone which indicated displeasure, "The Connexion will be ruined in its finances, if our present course of expenditure continue. We send men, for instance, to Scotland; and they return at the earliest possible opportunity. There is *that Newton*, who has just returned at the end of twelve months." Mrs. Newton, whose modesty had hitherto imposed silence upon her, gently said, "The reason why Mr. Newton has returned, is the loss of his health. But, so far as he is personally concerned, no fund will suffer; for he has borrowed the money to meet the expenses of his return, and

will himself repay the entire amount." Mr. Benson, who had been prompted to make the remark by a righteous jealousy, perceiving that he had partly mistaken the case, and that the female advocate of Mr. Newton probably stood in a near and tender relation to him, dropped the subject. He lived long enough to know that "that Newton," of whom he had been inclined to entertain an unfavourable opinion, was one of the last persons in the world to leave any post of duty under the influence of selfish motives; and was so far from injuring the funds of the Connexion, that he did more to replenish them than almost any ten men of his times.

After Mr. Newton's return from Scotland, and before he went to his new appointment, he paid a visit to some of his friends in the Howden Circuit, who were greatly impressed with the improvement which was observable in his ministry. For three successive years they had admired his preaching, and profited by it; but his views of evangelical truth were now more enlarged and comprehensive, and his manner of preaching it was more convincing and impressive. His friend Mr. Toase, also, in the letter to which reference has already been made, says: "I came into the ministry five years later than he did. During those five years he visited his family annually, and his friends always perceived considerable progress in his ministerial abilities. I often met him afterwards, in his visits to the various Circuits of the Connexion, and always found him the same kind friend that he was in his youth, when we met in our native villages on the moors of Yorkshire."

CHAPTER IV.

At the Conference of 1804 Mr. Newton was appointed to the Rotherham Circuit, under the superintendency of the Rev. John Crook, a man of exemplary zeal and fidelity; having acquired in the Wesleyan Connexion the honourable title of "the Apostle of the Isle of Man," because he was the chief means, under the counsel and sanction of Mr. Wesley, of introducing Methodist preaching into the island, and of organizing Societies in the principal towns and villages. With such a colleague Mr. Newton was eminently happy and thankful.

He and his family took possession of a very small house, which the Circuit had provided for the second Preacher. It had just been vacated by the Rev. Joseph Collier, whose wife is well remembered to have exemplified the advice of the devout Herbert,—

"Let thy mind's sweetness have its operation
Upon thy clothes and food and habitation."

The house was inconvenient, but was left by Mrs. Collier in a state of the most perfect cleanliness; and the plain furniture, which contained no superfluity in any department, was in a condition of perfect order and repair. Mrs. Newton, who was at that time young in the Methodist itinerancy, regarded her predecessor at Rotherham as an example which she ought to imitate as the wife of a Methodist Preacher, who should, from time to time, alternately occupy and vacate houses belonging to the Circuits.

Mr. Newton had not been long in his new sphere of labour, before he perceived that his lot was cast among

a people who were prepared to receive the truth. The congregations generally increased, especially in the town of Rotherham, where the erection of a new chapel was indispensable, in order that the crowds who wished to hear might be accommodated. He felt himself therefore at home in his work; and his frequent intercourse with his brother Jacob, who then laboured in the neighbouring Circuit of Doncaster, afforded him sincere gratification. He had now acquired some considerable experience as a Methodist Preacher, and was therefore able to afford seasonable counsel and help to one in whose welfare and success he could not but feel a lively interest. In the early part of December, therefore, when he had been in his Circuit only about three months, he addressed his faithful sister Ann in the following joyous and hopeful strain:—
“I have met with the kindest reception in every part of this Circuit. Our congregations are very large. It may indeed be said, ‘They fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows.’ In Rotherham we are under the pleasing necessity of enlarging our borders, by building a new chapel. I made proposals to the congregation in the evening of the last Sabbath-day; and the sum of about two hundred guineas has been already subscribed. If ever I had need to remember the rock whence I was hewn, I am sure I have now. I trust, however, that I was never more sensible than I am at present that I have nothing but what I have received.

“My health is much better than formerly. The exercise of riding does me much good. I believe another year in Glasgow would have destroyed me.

“I am glad to hear that our brother Thomas has begun to speak in public. Were I near him, I should rejoice to

afford him any assistance in my power. I had a good letter from my brother John the other day. I had no conception that he could write such a letter. I see my brother Jacob regularly once a month. He is going on well, and expresses much gratitude for any little assistance that I endeavour to give him in respect of the work in which we are both engaged. We enjoy every comfort in Rotherham, and are poor in nothing but thankfulness. Brother Booth seems very comfortable with Mr. Pawson.

“I am glad to hear that my good father’s health is so well established. I think it is probable that you will not continue at Roxby long. May the wise and gracious Providence that has hitherto been with us still direct us all in that which is best! My wife unites with me in most affectionate regards to you all.”

The project which is mentioned in this letter was carried into effect. The old chapel in Rotherham was taken down, and one of much larger dimensions erected on its site. Two commodious houses also, for the use of the Ministers and their families, were built upon the same premises; so that a new impulse was given to the cause of true religion, in its Methodistic form, in Rotherham and its neighbourhood.

The second year that Mr. Newton spent in the Rotherham Circuit was a season of considerable prosperity and blessing. Mr. John S. Pipe was his Superintendent, a man of great zeal and energy, and of good abilities as a Preacher. The Societies walked in peace and love, and at the end of the year presented an increase of nearly one hundred members.

The time having come for his removal, he bade farewell to his friends in the Circuit, among whom were several

who owned him as their spiritual father ; and these, with many others, followed him with their prayers and blessings. He left in the churchyard of Rotherham the remains of a child, who died in infancy ; and repaired to Sheffield, where he was next appointed to labour, and where he had as his colleagues the Rev. John Barber and Peter Haslam. Mr. Barber was a man of plain speech and manners, but of strong sense, of strict integrity, of an affectionate disposition, and entirely devoted to his work. Mr. Haslam was comparatively young in years. He was a man of deep and fervent piety, a hard student, an instructive and impressive Preacher, and of great promise in the Wesleyan ministry. His career was brilliant, but of short duration. The year that he spent with Messrs. Barber and Newton in Sheffield was his last in the active service of his Divine Master. With such colleagues Mr. Newton could not be otherwise than eminently happy. They had before them an encouraging field of labour, a town teeming with inhabitants, the people being mostly employed in manufactures, so as to be under no restraint from their employers with regard to the places of worship which they chose to attend. Increased accommodation, for the exercise of the Wesleyan ministry in the town, was provided by the erection of the noble chapel in Carver-street, which had been opened about twelve months ; and Mr. Newton, with his esteemed colleagues, laboured in harmony, and with encouraging success.

When he entered upon his labours in the Sheffield Circuit, he found that there was a division of opinion among the members of the Society on some subjects ; and, in fact, that they were divided in their judgments concerning him. Some of them alleged that he was not

a Revivalist, and others were displeased that his dress, in respect of its shape, did not exactly accord with their own. Without giving himself any direct concern about these things, he commenced his ministry in Sheffield with a sermon on Gal. vi. 14: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:" thus presenting to the people a fair specimen of his doctrine and spirit. As he proceeded in his work, the people perceived that he manifestly preached for the one purpose of promoting their salvation; that the unction of God was upon him; that Divine power attended his word; that he was mighty in prayer; that his ministry was successful in the conversion of ungodly men, and in the comfort and establishment of the children of God. The consequence was, that the men who had opposed his appointment felt they had done wrong; not a few of them waited upon him, confessed their error and fault, acknowledged that they had been mistaken, asked his forgiveness, and requested his acceptance of various articles of Sheffield manufacture, which they wished to present to him as an expression of their esteem and love. Some of these articles were in themselves of no great value, but they were accepted by Mr. Newton as tokens of a feeling—the feeling of holy love—which, in the sight of God and in reality, is of more permanent and substantial worth than all the precious metals in existence. They shall perish, but this feeling will be an element in the happiness of the blessed for ever.

It is not surprising that Mr. Newton should have vanquished the hostility of prejudiced parties in Sheffield, when we consider the spirit by which he was actuated,

and the manner in which he discharged his official duties. The following account of his ministry in Sheffield is given by one who was a witness of it, and who shared in its benefits. The Rev. William Smith, who has long been successfully engaged in the Wesleyan ministry, and now superintends one of its most important Circuits, says, in a letter which he kindly sent to the writer of these Memoirs,—

“By the appointment of the Conference of 1806, Sheffield, my native town, was blessed with the ministry of three extraordinary men:—the Rev. John Barber, the venerable Superintendent of the Circuit, was rich in experience, and ripe in wisdom; the Rev. Peter Haslam, of whom it was said, that he gave his hatred to nothing but sin, and his trust to none but Christ; and the Rev. Robert Newton, who, though last, was not the least. His fame having preceded him to his new field of labour, his congregations were crowded to excess. The power of his eloquence, his popular address, his imposing manners, and the richness of his theme—the cross of Christ—were all brought to bear upon the masses of people around him with irresistible effect. A spirit of inquiry was excited, and the question was eagerly put by many a conscience-stricken sinner, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ And the Lord added to the church daily such as willingly received the truth. I, sinful and unworthy, was among the number. My dear mother, whose Christian life was characterized by deep piety, brought up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She taught us to respect and venerate the Ministers of Christ, and enforced upon us the duty of a regular attendance upon the house of God. One evening, in the Carver-street

chapel, Mr. Newton took for his text, John ix. 4: 'I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.' On that occasion he was eminently a messenger from God, to whom was committed the word of reconciliation. His appeals, especially to the young of his congregation, were direct and pungent. The light of God's truth, that memorable evening, darted into many a youthful heart; and, exhibiting the hideous deformity of sin in contrast to the Divine purity, it made them exceedingly 'fear and quake,' as the scenes in the subsequent prayer-meeting testified. My mind was so borne down by a sense of God's displeasure, and so filled with fearful apprehensions of future misery, that, turning to my beloved parent, I said, 'Mother, let us go away. I am so overwhelmed with sorrow, that if I stay any longer, I shall cry aloud, and disturb the congregation.' About a month after this time I was brought to the Saviour, and, believing in Him, I found rest to my soul.

"At that time his ministry was replete with instruction, and not unfrequently attended by an unction which rendered it all but irresistible. He did not preach as if he thought that the simple exposition of the truth was his only duty in the pulpit. He addressed himself to the understandings, the consciences, the fears, and hopes of the people; and, by his powerful appeals, stirred the very depths of the soul, filling his hearers with alarm and terror, and rendering them unable to find any rest till they had come to Christ and obtained redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. The effect of his preaching was heightened by the veneration which was everywhere felt for his character; his spirit and deportment demon-

strating the depth of his piety. It was next to impossible to spend any time in conversation with him, without perceiving that his intercourse with God was intimate and sanctifying. He dwelt in God, and God in him; and the principle of Divine love, thence arising, so filled and pervaded his mind, as to give an air of sanctity to his entire demeanour, which it is difficult to express. It is therefore no wonder that the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands, and that many were through his instrumentality turned to righteousness."

To this statement it must be added, that when Mr. Newton went to Sheffield the vulgar infidelity of Paine was extensively prevalent among the working-classes in that town; and that the fame of his eloquence drew multitudes of the disciples of that daring unbeliever to the Methodist chapels, where they heard words whereby many of them were saved. Mr. Newton, in the course of his public ministry, gave such views of the real nature of the Gospel, of its Divine authority, and of the benefits which result from a cordial and practical reception of it, that many of its blasphemers were not only turned to Christ as their Saviour, and made new men in Him, but the tide of popular opinion, to a great and encouraging extent, was turned in its favour; so that those who did not in heart receive the truth ceased to revile it. The preaching of Mr. Newton was acknowledged to be one principal means of producing this important change in the public sentiment.

At the Conference of 1807, Mr. Haslam removed from Sheffield to Liverpool, where he died, somewhat suddenly, in the month of May following; and Mr. Bunting took his place in the Sheffield Circuit, as the fellow-labourer

of Messrs. Barber and Newton. This was, in every respect, a happy association, and one upon which great results were made to depend, such as the Conference never contemplated, and such as had not entered into the thoughts of the parties concerned. Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton were designed to exert a greater influence upon the practical working of Wesleyan Methodism, than any two men that were ever connected with it since the time of the Wesleys; and therefore to place them together, thus early in life, in this intimate relation, was a matter of the utmost importance, both to themselves and the cause with which they were identified. By this association they obtained a thorough knowledge of each other; and that knowledge soon ripened into a perfect friendship. They cherished for each other the most cordial affection, and each of them had an entire confidence in the other's integrity; and this affection and confidence, we believe, never suffered a moment's interruption, and never in the slightest degree abated, till they were severed by death. They were one in judgment on all matters connected with Methodism, and they were no less one in mind and heart. Mr. Bunting soon acquired a leading influence, both among the Ministers and laymen of the Wesleyan community. He has been charged with hostility to the just rights of the people. The charge was originated for sinister purposes, and has been echoed by persons who know neither the man nor his communications. He has done more to engage lay agency in the Methodist Connexion, and therefore to extend lay influence in the body, than any other man of his age; and that not only with regard to the management of its Foreign Missions, but of the work at home; and in all his purposes, in both

respects, he had the efficient support of his friend and ally Robert Newton.

Had these gifted men cherished a mutual jealousy, and set themselves to counteract each other's influence, and to establish rival interests in the body, the consequences must have been most disastrous to the common cause. But they were "true yoke-fellows," disinterested and unselfish in their purposes and plans, devoting their eminent talents to the public good, seeking no earthly reward, and laying at their Saviour's feet all the honours which their services commanded. They were exactly adapted to each other. If one planned, the other executed; and they acted in harmony, nearly half a century, with a zeal and ability which have gained for them the esteem and thankfulness of their contemporaries, and will insure the admiration of posterity. Their appointment to labour together in the Sheffield Circuit, in the year 1807, formed the basis of their sanctified friendship,—a friendship in which their families also have largely participated.

From Sheffield Mr. Newton removed to Huddersfield, at the Conference of 1808, where he was again invested with the office of Superintendent; his brother Jacob being one of his colleagues. In this new appointment he applied himself, with unabated diligence and fidelity, to the duties of his ministry; and his preaching was not only highly appreciated, but rendered an abundant blessing to multitudes. Here he formed some sanctified and lasting friendships with devoted Christians, the excellent of the earth; most of whom have finished their earthly course, and now sleep in Jesus. Among his most intimate friends we may specify the late Mr. Timothy Bentley, Mr. George Wilson, and Mr. Thornton.

The case of Mr. Wilson merits a special record. The son of a pious Methodist mother, he was for many years an eminently ungodly man; a frequenter of public-houses, a play-goer, a jovial companion, a wit, and a mimic. One Sunday afternoon, his wife, being overtaken by a shower of rain, and seeing the Methodist chapel in Huddersfield open, entered it for shelter. Mr. Newton was conducting the service; and she was greatly struck with his appearance and manner, thinking that he bore a strong resemblance to Kemble, whose theatrical powers she had often witnessed in London. The word reached her conscience, and she returned home anxious and distressed, told her husband where she had been, and insisted upon it that he should accompany her to hear this extraordinary Preacher. He consented; and the result was, that both were awakened, joined the Society, and found peace with God. Mr. Wilson soon became as eminent for piety, as he had been for ungodliness. He was zealous in the cause of Methodism, a liberal supporter of its institutions, a Local Preacher, and one principal means of the erection in Huddersfield of one of the largest and most handsome chapels in the Connexion, towards the expenses of which he was a very large contributor. For many years he adorned his religious profession, at length died in the Lord, and on the occasion of his decease a sermon was preached by Mr. Newton, on the well-known wish of Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

In Huddersfield Mr. Newton had the affliction to witness the failure of his brother Jacob's health, and the consequent cessation of his public services as a Methodist Preacher. He ruptured a blood-vessel, so as to be permanently

disqualified for his work ; and at length entered into business at Rotherham, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Here, also, another attempt was made to alienate Mr. Newton from the people of his confidence and affection. An uncle of Mrs. Newton, who had been her guardian, paid a visit to the family, and, for the first time in his life, attended Divine worship in a Methodist chapel, where he heard the husband of his niece. He expressed his admiration of Mr. Newton's talents, and his approval of the choice which she had made of him as her husband. At the same time, he expressed his regret that such a man should be a Methodist Preacher, and proposed that, without delay, he should be transferred to the Established Church; adding, "I will be at the expense of building him a church in London, or in any other place that he may prefer ; and there is no doubt that some one of the Bishops can be prevailed upon to ordain him. But if not, he may sustain a position like that of Mr. Rowland Hill, using the form of worship that is practised in the National Church, but without episcopal jurisdiction." To this proposal Mrs. Newton replied, that her husband's attachment to the Methodists was so strong and conscientious, that he never could be happy in any other religious community. This statement ended the conversation ; and Robert Newton lived and died a Methodist Preacher.

A letter which he received, about the same time, from an aged Minister in a neighbouring Circuit, contained sentiments respecting the work in which they were both engaged, which were in full accordance with the feelings of his own heart. The friends at Hepworth, in the Huddersfield Circuit, having erected a new chapel, desired to have the assistance of the Rev. Thomas Taylor, who was

then resident in Wakefield, in the opening services, and requested their Superintendent to write to him to that effect. Mr. Taylor was a tall, muscular man, of strong sense and tried fidelity, who had borne his full share in the hard toil and the severe privations which were connected with the Methodist ministry in its early existence. The following is the answer which this Christian veteran returned to Mr. Newton's application:—

“April 21st, 1809.—I am much obliged to you and our friends at Hepworth for their kind invitation to the opening of their new chapel, which I rejoice that they have raised; but I am engaged, just about that time, to be at Sheffield and Nottingham; that is, to take Sheffield in my way to Nottingham; and, as I am obliged to take very short stages on horseback, it takes me a long time to make a short journey. I used to travel from Sheffield to Nottingham to dinner; and now it is a three days' journey. Such is the result of forty-nine years' travelling, and often, in the beginning, with cold rooms and damp beds! Yet all is too little for so good, so kind, and patient a Master.

“I am the last of the poor old pioneers; for my company before is gone, and I hope to overtake them.

“Now, my brother, you have the honour of being a soldier in the grand army. Fight the good fight of faith. Keep the good *depositum*, the experience, the doctrine, and the discipline of the Methodists; that is, of the Scriptures. In so doing, thou shalt save thine own soul, and them that hear thee. The Lord bless you and yours! I am your affectionate friend and brother.”

The advice which is contained in the concluding sentences of this epistle was not lost upon Mr. Newton. No

man ever lived who was more faithful to his trust as a Methodist Preacher than he.

During his second year in the Huddersfield Circuit, Mr. Newton had as one of his colleagues the Rev. John Kershaw, to whose ministry and conversation he was indebted, under God, for his first religious awakenings, and for whom, both on this and other accounts, he cherished a just and sincere regard. They laboured together in peace and harmony, and with encouraging success. Mr. Kershaw survived his friend Newton, and died at Stoke-Newington in the ninetieth year of his age. He was eminently a man of peace, and fulfilled the duties of the Wesleyan ministry, with undeviating faithfulness and consistency, for nearly fifty years. His sermons were usually brief, but instructive and edifying, and were delivered in short and pithy sentences, which all could understand.

Having spent two years in Huddersfield, Mr. Newton repaired to London, to attend the sittings of the Conference, expecting, of course, to be removed to another field of labour. At this Conference an incident occurred which, for the time, gave him considerable uneasiness, but which greatly tended to raise him in the estimation of his brethren. It is thus described by his faithful friend, Jacob Owen, Esq., now of Dublin, but then of Portsmouth:—

“I first met my honoured friend at the Conference held in London, in the year 1810, on which occasion we were the guests of the excellent Joseph Butterworth, then residing in his house of business in Fleet-street. The late Dr. Dermott was associated with Mr. Newton; and they both slept in the same room. The President, the Rev.

Joseph Benson, very unexpectedly, and without any previous notice, announced, on the Saturday, that brother Robert Newton would preach before the Conference the next morning, in the City-road chapel. Poor Newton returned to his domicile much dispirited; and, the next morning, Dr. Dermott, who first joined the breakfast-party, said he believed that his brother Newton had not slept for a single moment all night; and the haggard appearance of Mr. Newton, on his entrance into the breakfast-room, fully corroborated the report.

“I had the satisfaction of hearing the sermon, which was listened to with intense interest, and produced as great an effect on the congregation, which included a large number of Ministers, as I ever witnessed either before or since. Among the Preachers there were several who had endured many hardships, privations, and persecutions in the cause of Methodism, especially in its early days. Mr. Newton appeared somewhat embarrassed on ascending the pulpit, which was not unnatural in so young a man, who was called to address such an audience. The sermon was delivered with great simplicity and force. The comparative youth of the Preacher, his prepossessing appearance, and the sonorousness of his incomparable voice, added much to the effect of his address; which, however, was delivered with so much power, as to excite the admiration, and even astonishment, of that vast assembly.”

At this Conference he was appointed to the Holmfirth Circuit, which was then formed by a separation from Huddersfield, and the Rev. John Brown was his colleague. The people in Holmfirth and its neighbourhood were mostly engaged in manufacturing operations, and did not generally affect the refinements of polished and fashionable

society ; but among the people who attended the Methodist chapels were many persons of powerful intellect, who understood the Scriptures, were well versed in Christian theology, and accurately acquainted with the various points at issue between different bodies of religious professors : so that the Ministers who laboured among them were under a constant stimulus to excel in their pulpit-performances, well knowing that the matter of every sermon would be duly scanned by their hearers.

What Mr. Newton was in the Holmfirth Circuit is declared in the beautiful and graphic account which has been kindly furnished by his colleague. "He was then," says Mr. Brown, "in the prime of life, possessed of extraordinary vigour both of body and mind ; and, as I lived in his family, I had the opportunity of seeing and conversing with him daily, and of observing his domestic walk and conversation, as well as of forming an acquaintance with his private studies and public services. I well recollect that, on his coming down stairs on a Sunday morning, his usual reply to my inquiry concerning his health was, with an expression of gratitude, 'I am strong to labour.' He was open, kind, generous, exhibiting constant serenity of temper. Towards Mrs. Newton especially his whole behaviour was marked, in a very high degree, by respectful attention and tender regard.

"The first time that I saw him in the pulpit was on a Sunday evening, in the old chapel at Holmfirth. He commenced the service by giving out the hymn beginning,

'Eternal Power, whose high abode
Becomes the grandeur of a God,
Infinite lengths beyond the bounds
Where stars revolve their little rounds !'

His person, countenance, eye, manner, the rich mellow tones of his musical voice, the natural and appropriate emphasis, joined to the sublimity of the sentiments, were all calculated to make a permanent impression. Nearly forty-four eventful years have rolled over me since that time; yet I can vividly recall him to my mind's eye, as he then appeared. In his address all was nature; he spoke from head to foot, and gave a grace to everything that he uttered.

“He was remarkably communicative. I believe he never composed a sermon, during the time I was with him, of which he did not either tell me the outline, or read to me what he had written of it. How often have I seen him come out of the walk at Bing's-Wood, with a gentle swing of the arm, and a slight jerk of the thumb, as if he were tossing a marble or a cherry-stone from it! He would thus accost me: ‘I have got a new text;’ and then repeat the plan of the discourse, so far as he had formed it in his mind. He would then go into the parlour, where Mrs. Newton and the children were sitting, place himself before his desk, and commit his thoughts to paper. He generally wrote his sermons at full length. This I know from the actual inspection of his manuscripts; and I have reason to believe that at Holmfirth not a few of those discourses were prepared, with which, through a long succession of years, he charmed and edified the vast congregations which crowded to hear him.

“While at Holmfirth he read much, especially divinity, taking particular pleasure in volumes of good sermons; and I was often surprised at the readiness with which he made himself acquainted with the contents of the books that came under his notice. In these early years of his

ministry, by reading and hard study, he accumulated those stores of Divine knowledge, from which he so copiously produced things new and old, for so many years, to the edification and delight of the crowds who hung upon his lips.

“Whilst he was at Holmfirth an outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place, and there was a considerable ingathering to the Societies. The people flocked to hear the word; and at the class-meetings, many of which I attended, there was often felt

‘The’ o’erwhelming power of saving grace.’

I have seen persons, as if overpowered, heaving deep sighs, or uttering a soft inward groan, without crying aloud, or making any tumult.

“One evening I accompanied him to a country place, where he was appointed to preach. The service was held in a private house. On such occasions no seats were either provided, or even thought of. Every chair, bench, table, or other article of furniture that could be moved, was cleared away, to make standing-room for the congregation. The service began, and the room was literally crammed. A voice from without cried, ‘Mr. Newton, there are as many outside as in.’ He answered, ‘Will any of you open his house?’ A person instantly answered, ‘I will open mine.’ Mr. Newton then requested me to go and preach. We had two crowded congregations, separated only by a wall. The power of God was manifested, a flame was kindled, and in a short time no less than sixty persons were brought into the Society in that neighbourhood.

“During our connexion in the Holmfirth Circuit,

I think I must have heard him preach a hundred times. We heard each other every other Sunday evening at Holmfirth. I often accompanied him to his appointments on the week-day evenings, and we frequently held what were called double lectures,—two sermons being delivered during the same service,—and these often proved times of spiritual refreshing. I was in the habit of writing down in my journal an outline of the sermons which I heard him preach, many of which are now in my possession.

“If he was great on great occasions, he was not less so as an every-day preacher. The poorest and most unlearned of his hearers listened to him with delight. A plain man, a weaver, I remember, once accosted him thus: ‘Maister Nughton, yo’ always tak’ plain texts;’ a plain proof that whatever text he took, he made the subject plain to the man’s understanding. I have frequently heard the remark, ‘I can remember more of Mr. Newton’s sermons than those of any other man.’ On reviewing my record of his discourses, I am again impressed with the plain, pointed, faithful, experimental, and practical character of his preaching. He always gave a full and just exposition of his text, applying the doctrines and duties deduced from it with earnestness to the consciences of the people; his sole aim being the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers. In this respect he was a model to his brethren and successors in the ministry.

“He had, indeed, every advantage of person and of voice; and some persons have attributed his eminence, as a public speaker, to these natural qualifications only; but this is as absurd as to suppose that the materials of a building, collected in one place, should move, and form

themselves into a magnificent edifice. He was, especially in early life, before he was brought into uninterrupted public service, a diligent student, and a careful observer of the best examples of effective preaching."

Such was his proficiency in Divine knowledge, and his celebrity as a Preacher, that he was frequently requested to afford his aid in behalf of different charities; and during his residence in Holmfirth, the venerable Joseph Benson, then the President of the Conference, selected him as one of the men who should preach a course of sermons before their brethren, at the time of their next annual assembling; the sermon which he had delivered before them in the City-road chapel, a few months before, having given ample proof of his fitness for the service. The subjects which Mr. Benson selected to be discoursed upon, embraced the great outlines of evangelical truth. They were too numerous to be all successfully discussed during the sittings of one Conference, and were therefore extended to two. Some of the sermons were published in the Methodist Magazine, and others in a separate form. The subjects which were assigned to Mr. Newton were, the Immortality of the human Soul, and the Resurrection of the Body; and a sermon embracing these two points he addressed to the Conference in Leeds, in the year 1812, when his friend Mr. Bunting delivered his justly-celebrated sermon on Justification, which has often been reprinted. Mr. Newton's sermon was not committed to the press, but was every way worthy of that distinction.

Before he left the Holmfirth Circuit, he was subjected to painful trials, arising from the agitated state of society in his neighbourhood. The protracted war, which arose out of the French Revolution, was still prosecuted; provisions

were dear; the privations of the poor were severe; disaffection to the existing Government was deep-rooted and widely spread, exasperated by inflammatory publications. An imaginary personage, bearing the name of General Ludd, was said to be arranging his plans for the cure of existing evils, and to avenge the cause of the poor. A gentleman, named Horsfall, returning home one evening, was shot in his gig; marauding parties sallied forth during the night, breaking machinery in factories, stealing fire-arms in private houses, and plundering defenceless families. The fire-arms that were thus collected, professedly in the name and behalf of General Ludd, could not be discovered. It was at length suspected that the roof of a chapel in Mr. Newton's Circuit was occupied as a depôt for this kind of stolen property. It was accordingly searched, but no fire-arms were found; yet the answers of the chapel-keeper, when questioned on the subject, were so equivocal and unsatisfactory, as to produce an impression that, with his connivance, the place had been so occupied. He was therefore dismissed from his situation.

A more sincere friend of the poor did not then exist than was Mr. Newton; but he knew that acts of violence would not improve their condition, and therefore bore a faithful testimony against these lawless proceedings, and warned the people against them. On this account, as well as on account of the dismissal of the chapel-keeper, he was understood to be an object of hostility among the adherents of General Ludd, and not a few of his friends were alarmed for his safety; yet he was not a man that would shrink from the discharge of his duty, in any circumstances, however perilous. Two loaded pistols were found secreted in a hedge near his dwelling; but whether they were intended

to be employed against him, "the day will declare." He left the Circuit without sustaining any personal injury; and one of the Magistrates addressed to him a letter, thanking him for his loyalty, and the valuable use which he had made of his influence in support of law and order.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER the Conference of 1812, Mr. Newton repaired to the London West Circuit, to which he was appointed, under the superintendency of the Rev. John Barber, with Mr. Reece also as his colleague. The house which he and his family occupied adjoined the Hinde-street chapel, near Manchester-square, the chapel having been but recently erected. The present commodious chapel in Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields, had not then been built. The place which was then occupied by the congregation there, and which was regarded as the head of the Circuit, was far too small for the people who desired to attend. The change was very great from the rough mountain-scenery of Holmfirth, and the plain manners of the people there, to the West-end of London; presenting a profusion of wealth and fashion, where gentlemen and ladies, with their glittering equipages, and attended by liveried servants, were seen moving in all directions: but he was as well qualified to address a London audience, as a congregation of farmers' labourers, or of men and women rushing from the crowded factories of Yorkshire; and he well knew that there is but one way of salvation open to all.

When he entered upon his ministry in London, he found the congregations accustomed to a mode of worship somewhat different from that in which he had hitherto taken part as a Methodist Preacher. In the Circuits where he had laboured, he was accustomed only to extemporary prayer in the public service of God; but in most of the London chapels he found the Liturgy of the Church of

England used in the forenoon of every Lord's day. To him this was a novelty, but no inconvenience, and no offence, but rather an agreeable variety, and a means of edification. The Liturgy recommended itself to his ear and his taste by the rhythm of its periods, and the force of its diction; and it recommended itself still more to his heart by the evangelical sentiments which it embodies, and the spirit of pure and elevated devotion by which it is pervaded. The comprehensiveness of its petitions in behalf of all classes of the human race, embracing every form of suffering humanity, gave expression to the expansive charity of his sanctified heart; and in the use of this "form of sound words" he felt himself able, from Sabbath to Sabbath, to worship God "in spirit and in truth." At this period he contracted such a love for the Liturgy, that in future life it afforded him a sincere satisfaction to be appointed to Circuits where the people were accustomed to the use of it.

In London his ministry was as highly appreciated as it was in other places; so that his congregations were large: the people gave him every proof of their affectionate esteem, and not a few were, by God's blessing upon his faithful preaching, turned from sin to righteousness. Yet London was less acceptable to him as a station than the other places where he had laboured. Being the centre of Connexional operations, numerous Committees were held there, which he was expected to attend. These occupied much time, and diverted his attention from preaching, and from the work of pulpit-preparation, in which above all things his soul delighted. The fact is, he never had that aptitude for the details of business in which some men excel. He felt that he was made for

action, rather than for deliberation, and that the duties of the pulpit were his special forte and calling. He did attend the meetings of Committees, as in duty bound, having in them a trust to execute; but he was always glad to escape from them to employment which was more congenial to his taste.

In London he entered upon his brilliant career as a speaker at public meetings. At that time the Wesleyan Missions were advocated only from the pulpit, and by means of private and personal application; but the British and Foreign Bible Society was then in successful operation, and was gradually rising into notice. Its adversaries were numerous and formidable, and its efficient advocates comparatively few; and yet it was felt that the greatest possible publicity ought to be given to its simple plan and its sublime purpose. Mr. Butterworth was an efficient member of its Managing Committee, and one of its most enlightened and zealous friends. By his influence Mr. Newton was engaged in its holy service, so far as his other duties would permit; and, upon the platform of its meetings, he was no unworthy associate of its Secretaries, the generous and eloquent Owen, the able, devout, and faithful Hughes and Steinkopff. For some years afterwards Mr. Newton was in the habit of visiting even distant places to attend important meetings of this noble institution. In many instances he did this at the request of his friend Mr. Butterworth, that zealous philanthropist being answerable for the expense of travelling.

In those times it is well known that Dr. Coke, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his engagements, not only submitted to the humble office of a Missionary Collector, but, to his honour be it spoken, was the only Missionary

Collector in the Methodist Connexion. He was accustomed, in London, and in the provincial towns which he visited, to wait upon such persons as were likely to aid him in his plans for evangelizing the Heathen, being usually accompanied by a Minister, or such other friend as he could persuade to sacrifice the requisite time. Mr. Newton had the honour and pleasure of attending that very excellent man in this "drudgery of charity," as it has been appropriately called. To save time, and prevent an unnecessary waste of physical strength, the Doctor and his companion generally rode in a hackney-coach. When they had succeeded in obtaining a subscription, the Doctor was careful to inform the donor that the vehicle which conveyed him and his friend from place to place was provided at his own expense, and was not paid for out of the contributions of the public.

With Dr. Coke Mr. Newton could not but feel a lively sympathy. He had been first introduced to him in Howden, and was deeply impressed with the disinterestedness and zeal of the Doctor, who had, from the time of their origin, during the life of Mr. Wesley, borne the principal care and responsibility of the Methodist Missions. Having crossed the Atlantic Ocean eighteen times for Missionary purposes, and being sixty-six years of age, he meditated the establishment of a Wesleyan Mission in India. His friends attempted to dissuade him from the enterprise, reminding him of the importance of his services as the Superintendent of the Missions already in existence, his great age, and the difficulty of providing the pecuniary means. He heard all their objections; offered, if it were necessary, to advance six thousand pounds out of his own private resources for the object; and, bursting into tears,

he indistinctly articulated, "If you will not let me go to India, you will break my heart!" In these circumstances, further opposition was deemed vain, and the Minutes of the Conference of 1813 include the following entry:—"The Conference authorizes and appoints Dr. Coke to undertake a Mission to Ceylon and Java; and allows him to take with him six Preachers for that purpose, exclusively of one for the Cape of Good Hope."

Under this sanction, the Doctor prepared for his departure, and, accompanied by six faithful men, who had offered themselves for this service, embarked at Portsmouth at the end of the year, followed by the prayers and blessings of thousands; many of whom, however, while they admired his zeal and disinterestedness, seriously apprehended that the undertaking would be a failure.

Of these events Mr. Newton was no indifferent spectator; and there can be no doubt that his intercourse with Dr. Coke at this time, and his observance of the spirit of that extraordinary man, tended much to fix his attention upon the state of the Heathen, and upon the duty of Christians to attempt their evangelization, and thus to kindle in his generous heart that intense and burning desire for the universal spread of the Gospel which was a prime element in his character to the end of his life.

When he had spent two years in London, the friends there, as it might be expected, were anxious to secure his continuance among them; but this he rather declined, for the reason which has been already stated, and also on account of Mrs. Newton's health. It was his desire, therefore, in submission to his brethren in Conference assembled, to leave the metropolis, and take an appointment in the country. His feeling on this subject was

generally known ; and he was never again appointed to a London Circuit.

Before he left the metropolis, he had an opportunity of witnessing there a scene of unprecedented hilarity. The power of Napoleon Bonaparte was broken ; the terrible and protracted war, which had inflicted indescribable miseries upon Europe, was at an end ; and the man who had long been the terror of his race was sent to spend the remainder of his days upon a small island in the Mediterranean Sea. The Bourbons were restored to the throne of France ; the exiles of that country returned to the land of their fathers ; the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Austria, with the Generals of their armies who had signalized themselves in the war, visited England. The whole kingdom blazed with illuminations and bonfires ; and London, where the illustrious strangers exhibited themselves, was absolutely intoxicated with joy. Several French exiles lived in the same street with Mr. Newton ; and he saw them, with their families, breaking up their respective establishments, taking leave of the country which had afforded them an asylum, and expecting to spend the residue of their days in security and peace. Little was it then apprehended that in a few brief months the vanquished tyrant would regain his position, as the head of the French army and nation ; that the war would be renewed with unabated fierceness ; and that another tremendous conflict, to take place on the plains of Waterloo, would be found necessary in order to the restoration of permanent tranquillity.

But neither these stirring events, nor any others of a secular nature, could divert the mind of Mr. Newton from that spiritual work to which he felt himself divinely called.

To save the souls of men, by preaching Christ's Gospel, was the business of his life ; and in the furtherance of this object, he was ready to afford all necessary counsel and encouragement to his fellow-labourers. The following extracts of letters which he wrote, during his residence in London, to Mr. William Smith, whom he rejoiced to acknowledge as his son in the Gospel, will serve further to show his spirit at this period of his life :—

“I am not surprised to learn that your mind is painfully exercised respecting your call to the ministry. It is what most of your fathers and brethren have experienced before you. Recollect, however, that you did not enter on the itinerant life with the desire or prospect of worldly advantage ; nor did you thrust yourself into the work. You were called by the church where you were known, and then by your brethren in the ministry ; and to their united voice God has affixed His seal, by giving you fruit of your labour. I will therefore say to you what a good old man said to me the first year I travelled. After having patiently heard all I had to say about leaving the work, he said, with a look which I shall not soon forget, ‘YOU DARE NOT.’ The saying of the old man has often been of use to me since then, when I have felt discouraged ; and I think you *dare now* relinquish the work to which Christ and His church have called you. Go on, my brother, in the name of the Lord ; and He will bless you, and make you a blessing. What an honour it is to be employed for Jesus Christ, in saving souls from death ! Never let it be said that you have acted the part of a coward, by leaving the field of action. If we are instrumental in turning a single individual from Satan to God, it is more than the acquisition of ten thousand worlds.

“We have a good work in this Circuit. The fields are white to the harvest. I hope we shall see still greater prosperity.”

“I am happy to hear of your success. Great and glorious is the work to which you are called. May you ever make full proof of your ministry, and be made a blessing to thousands! With respect to the subject of your inquiry, I scarcely know what to say. I can inform you what I have uniformly done during the almost fifteen years of my itinerancy. I have never taken any step, directly or indirectly, towards going to any Circuit, or continuing there when sent by my brethren. Were I in your case, I should leave the business entirely with the Conference, and regard their decision as the voice of Providence.”

“I believe it will be my duty to leave the metropolis this year, as it does not agree with Mrs. Newton’s health. Our Quarterly Meeting have resolved to request the Conference to appoint me to this Circuit a third year; but I do not think their request will be answered. I pray that the great Head of the church may dispose of us all to His glory.”

Mr. Newton’s next removal was to Wakefield, where he spent three eminently useful and happy years, during two of which the writer of these pages had the happiness of being his colleague, of frequently hearing him preach, and of observing his daily spirit and deportment. We lived in habits of intimacy; and I can truly say that I never observed in him anything that even appeared to be matter of blame; nor do I recollect to have heard any one utter an unkind word respecting him. He maintained the purity of the Societies by a strict discipline; yet even his official censures were administered with tenderness and in the fear

of God. His preaching was more than acceptable. It was everywhere admired, and a blessing from God attended it; so that its great purpose was answered in the enlargement and edification of the church.

At that time Wakefield presented a very different appearance from that which it bears at present. It was then chiefly noted for its corn and cattle market, and was not enveloped in clouds of smoke, issuing from the tall chimneys of numerous factories, but was, in every respect, a desirable place of residence. The Society in the town was numerous and highly respectable, including many families of intelligence and piety, who vied with each other in showing respect to their Pastors, and in co-operating with them for the advancement of true religion. Messrs. Bradburn and Watson, two of the most eminent Ministers in the Methodist Connexion, had then been recently resident in Wakefield; and the observations which the friends were accustomed to make concerning the preaching, the conversation, and the habits of these honoured men, were a perpetual occasion of delight and profit.

At this time Mr. Newton's services were in great request; and many were the applications which he received to preach in behalf of local charities; and the aggregate of the amount which he sometimes paid for his popularity was considerable. The penny postage had not then been introduced; and it not unfrequently happened that the postman's demands upon him, in the course of three months, was a serious reduction of his quarterage. When he visited particular places, too, the thrifty treasurers of the charities which he had come to advocate calculated the amount of the coach-fare, and gave him most righteously the exact amount, leaving him to settle the question

of gratuities to the coachmen and guards as best he might. He often smiled at these things, as presenting one of the phases of human nature. Regarding them in the most favourable light, they were inadvertencies in one party, and matter of inconvenience in the other. As he always appeared respectable, it was probably thought that the loss of a few shillings was to him a matter of no moment; but the loss of a few shillings weekly was a grave concern at the end of twelve months, especially to a man with a growing family dependent upon him.*

It was during his appointment to the Wakefield Circuit that Mr. Newton's powers, as an advocate of Missions to the Heathen, were fully called into requisition. From the year 1804 he and his brethren were accustomed, once in twelve months, to make a public collection in all their preaching-places; but beyond this no attempt was made to enlist the sympathies of the people generally in behalf of the good work, except what might be done by Dr. Coke himself. But when the Doctor had embarked for India, the Ministers and friends in Leeds, feeling that something more was requisite, called a public meeting, and organized a Society, for the express purpose of increasing the pecuniary supplies by an extensive canvass of the entire District, in order to obtain weekly, monthly, and quarterly contributions. The friends in the Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle Districts followed the example; and many were the searchings of heart which these pro-

* We have seen a letter in the handwriting of the late Mr. William Dawson, in answer to a request which was made to him to preach in behalf of some charity, in which he says, "If my friends who write to me for such a purpose expect me to reply, I should not be offended if I should find a Queen's head in every letter that they send."

ceedings excited. Some thought that public meetings might generate a spirit of unhallowed levity, which would be highly injurious to the cause of spiritual religion. Others thought that such publicity would be given to foreign Missions, and such an interest in their favour created, that they would be supported at the expense of every other Christian object. In these circumstances timid men were afraid to speak, and afraid to act. In the meanwhile, the meetings that were held, and the Societies that were organized, were productive of nothing but good; and that good was marked and undeniable.

When these measures were first taken in the provinces, Mr. Newton was in London, prepared for every good work, as soon as an opportunity for the performance of it should be presented. Of the beneficial tendency of Missionary Meetings he could entertain no doubt, having so often witnessed the holy enjoyment which characterized the meetings of the Bible Society.

The Conference, on its assembling, received a report of the Missionary doings in the Districts just mentioned, and, having heard the objections which were urged against them, passed the following resolution:—"We strongly recommend the immediate establishment of a Methodist Missionary Society in every District in the kingdom, (in which it has not been already accomplished,) on the general plan of those Societies which have been formed in Yorkshire and elsewhere during the past year." It is also added, "The thanks of the Conference are given to those of our Preachers in the Leeds, Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle Districts, who have been concerned in the formation of Methodist Missionary Societies; and to all the members and friends of the said Societies, for the

very liberal and zealous support which they have afforded to us, in this important department of the work of God."

The effect produced by the passing and the publication of these Resolutions was extraordinary. A general movement in favour of the Methodist Missions took place throughout the Connexion. Ministers and laymen vied with each other in zealous efforts for the advancement of the sacred cause. District Societies were first formed; then Circuit Societies; and next Societies in the various towns, villages, and hamlets in the several Circuits. To organize these various institutions, so as to engage the services of Committees, Secretaries, and Collectors, required no small amount of intelligence and labour. Every place required its public meeting, and the aid of practical men who could explain the entire scheme, and could adduce such motives as were likely to rouse the dormant to action. At first the number of able and willing advocates was small; but they increased as the work advanced: for men who had never before addressed an assembly, except from the pulpit, had to learn how to interest a public meeting by an energetic and practical speech; and it was amusing to find how some really eloquent men hesitated, and even blundered, when they essayed to speak in this novel character. Among the senior Ministers of the body, Messrs. James Wood, Walter Griffith, Richard Reece, and George Morley, obtained an honourable distinction by their zeal and ability in the cause of Christ; and among the laymen, Messrs. Thompson of Hull, Butterworth of London, Scarth of Leeds, Holy of Sheffield, Carne of Penzance, and Irving of Bristol, and many others, set an example of prompt liberality to the friends of Christ everywhere.

In these early Missionary Meetings the topics introduced were greatly diversified. Anecdotes, old and new, illustrative of the true nature of Christian liberality, and adapted to expose the native selfishness of the human heart, were brought into requisition, with the gross ignorance and horrible superstitions of the Heathen; the perilousness of their state with respect to eternity; the adaptation of the Gospel to all the wants and miseries of our fallen world; the promise of Divine assistance; examples of past success; new openings; the prospect of future good; the zeal and liberality of other bodies of Christians, &c. The holy and grateful excitement which these meetings presented—composed, as they often were, of young men and maidens, old men, matrons, and children—forced upon one's recollection scenes in the apostolic history, when faithful men "rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles;" and when "they caused great joy unto all the brethren."

In Yorkshire, at that time, were three men who stood out in bold relief in connexion with this work, and whose names will ever be honourably associated in the history of the Wesleyan Missions. We mean, as every one will understand, Mr. Bunting, then of Leeds; Mr. Watson, of Hull; and Mr. Newton, of Wakefield. To Mr. Bunting must be assigned the imperishable honour, to a great extent, of originating and directing the entire movement; and his Missionary sermons and speeches were characterized by a clearness and a force which were peculiarly his own. The feelings which they produced were regret for the past; earnest desire, by present and future liberality and effort, to retrieve former selfishness and neg-

lect; and a fear lest, after all, the final account would be unsatisfactory. The views which he presented of Christian responsibility with respect to the Heathen, touched many a conscience, and stimulated not a few to acts of generosity and self-denial in the sacred cause.

In the pulpit, and upon the Missionary platform, Mr. Watson's manner was calm and unimpassioned, answering to the sublime conceptions of his intellect. He invested the enterprise with a spiritual and moral grandeur, which was absolutely overpowering; while in his own inimitable manner he connected it with the eternal counsels of the Godhead, the creation of the universe, the arrangements of Providence, the scheme of redemption, the work of the Holy Spirit, the advancement of civilization,—with commerce, literature, legislation, the liberal arts,—and, above all, with the glory of the Holy Trinity in the everlasting salvation of mankind. Upon these and kindred topics he often expatiated till the people around him were filled with wonder, awed into breathless silence, and were “all but their attention dead.”

Yet Robert Newton was the man of the people. There was such a frankness in his tones and manner, that he no sooner began to speak in a Missionary Meeting, than every countenance was brightened with a smile, and the audience, as if by general agreement, surrendered themselves to him. He had the power, above almost every other man, of communicating to the multitude the sentiments and purposes of his own large and generous heart. He was therefore usually selected to deliver his speech just before the collection was made; and while he appealed to the crowds around him, their hearty responses and entire demeanour forcibly reminded one of the tribes of Israel,

when "all the people answered to one another, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

The estimation in which he was held as an advocate of Missions, soon after he had begun to take part in public Missionary services, will appear from the following brief note, which was addressed to him by Mr. Watson, announcing to him the sermons which were appointed to be preached in connexion with "the first Annual Meeting of the Methodist Missionary Society for Hull, York, and other Circuits in the York District, to be held in Waltham-street chapel, Hull, on Wednesday, April 12th, 1815, at two o'clock in the afternoon:"—

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—

"THAT you may be early acquainted with the order of the services, I have sent this by post, rather than wait my coming to Wakefield. As coming first, you will be relieved from all apprehension of being anticipated; but our motive was, that we might secure a full chapel on the first evening, and obtain an impulse which, under the Divine blessing, will carry us through the whole with spirit."

Many a voice which in those times was lifted up in behalf of this cause is now silent in death, and many a hand which was then stretched out to help it forward will move no more in this world; but the cause yet lives and flourishes, and the "works" of its early friends "do follow them." Messrs. Griffith, Reece, and Martindale were associated with Mr. Newton, as Preachers, in connexion with the meeting in Hull. They have all finished their course, and entered into rest.

While Mr. Newton shared with his brethren in the holy excitement and joy of Missionary Meetings, he was called to endure the sorrows of bereavement. His venerable father had resigned his farming occupations at Roxby, and retired to Thorpe, near Whitby, where, having completed his eighty-third year, the time arrived when he must yield his spirit into the hands of God who gave it. During his last illness he was repeatedly visited by his son Robert, who invariably found him happy in God, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. "Never, while memory holds her seat," says the pious son, "shall I forget the sensations which thrilled through my heart when I took leave of him a little before his death. The expression of his countenance, the tears of tenderness which flowed from his eyes, the tone of his voice, are all present to my recollection. I think I see him at this moment. Pressing my hand with his dying fingers, he spoke to the following effect: 'Farewell, my dear Robert! Go and preach Jesus Christ to perishing sinners. It is the most glorious and important work in which mortals can be employed. God continue to be gracious to thee, my son!' At that awful moment the power of speech entirely forsook me. At last I was enabled to articulate, 'We shall meet again!' 'In a better place!' was his emphatic reply: words which still seem to vibrate on my ears."

Intelligence of his departure was communicated to his son Robert by a letter from his sister Ann; on the receipt of which he thus addressed his widowed mother:—

"No words can describe the sensations of my heart when I read my sister's letter, which informed me that my father was not. But God's will is wise and gracious, and

our loss is my revered father's infinite gain. I found consolation and admonition in the words of Jesus Christ, addressed to His disciples, 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father.' Selfish indeed would be that love which cannot rejoice at the consummation of the wishes and desires of the object of its regard. My beloved father had long desired 'to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' His trouble and pain have for ever ceased; and his happiness is inconceivably more abundant and complete than it could possibly be in this world. May we all follow him as he followed his Lord! and we shall overtake him where separation shall be no more.

"For you I have felt much. Though you were enabled to give up my father, yet I can conceive you feel more since than you did then. But the Lord hath promised to be a Husband to the widow. That promise is now become yours, and I believe you will experience its accomplishment. The Lord will protect, comfort, and support.

"Through the abundant mercy of God, we are all well. My dearest Elizabeth sincerely condoles with you in your bereaved state. When we received the account of my father's removal, we sat down, and both wept till we had no more power to weep. But we must all bow to the Divine will, and pray that the dispensation may be sanctified to us all. God bless you, my dear mother, for ever and ever! This is the earnest prayer of your affectionate son."

Mr. Newton, sen., died on the 5th of March, 1816, and his son Robert embalmed the memory of his sainted parent in a beautiful sketch of his life and character, which he published in an octavo pamphlet of twenty-seven pages, and which is the only production of his pen that he

ever committed to the press. It affords ample proof, however, that, had he affected authorship, he would have excelled in that as well as in public speaking.

Reference has already been made to his services in connexion with the British and Foreign Bible Society; and it is but justice to him to state, that it was by his means chiefly that an Auxiliary Society, in alliance with that noble institution, was formed in Wakefield. Mr. Hughes visited Leeds on occasion of the Anniversary of the Auxiliary Bible Society in that town. Mr. Newton met him there, and took counsel with him on the subject of commencing such a Society in Wakefield; and the consequence was that, with the co-operation of Mr. Rogers, a pious Clergyman then resident there, and of Mr. Rayson, the Dissenting Minister, a Society was organized, which has ever since continued in beneficial operation.

As a further illustration of the effectiveness of his preaching, and of the estimation in which he was held, it may be stated that, when he attended the London Conference of 1816, he preached before his brethren in the City-road chapel, in the morning of Sunday, August 4th, when the place was so crowded that another Minister was called to address a multitude in the chapel-yard, who could not gain admission; although Dr. Adam Clarke was preaching at the same hour in the adjoining chapel of Spitalfields. At the close of the service, Mr. Benson followed him into the vestry, saying, "I thank you a thousand times;" and the next morning, in the Conference, that distinguished Minister, who was one of the last men in the world to deal in flattery, pronounced a high eulogium upon the sermon; the subject of which was the duty of ceaseless prayer, from 1 Thess. v. 17.

To Mr. Newton it was a matter of thankfulness that his ministry was not only approved by the wise and the good, but that it was also effectual in that which is the great end of all preaching, the salvation of souls. About this time he accepted an invitation from Lincoln, to unite with his friend Watson in the opening services of a new and commodious Methodist chapel in that ancient city. Among other persons that were attracted by the fame of these Preachers was a young medical gentleman, who had commenced practice in a large village about nine miles from Lincoln. His mind had been awakened to a feeling of spiritual destitution. He wanted peace of mind; but knew not where to find it, nor in what it really consists. He listened with deep attention and interest to Mr. Newton's sermon on Psalm cxliv. 15: "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." Heavenly light beamed upon his benighted mind; he saw the way of peace, as it is revealed in the Gospel; he went home instructed, and soon after, by believing in Christ, was enabled to rejoice in the God of his salvation. He became an acceptable and useful Local Preacher, and was made a blessing to many. Cases of a similar kind were of frequent occurrence through the public life of this laborious and holy man.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM the year 1817, when he left Wakefield, to the end of his itinerant ministry, Mr. Newton's *official* labours, to which he was appointed by the Conference, were confined to fewer Circuits than were those of any of his contemporaries; but his labours which he *voluntarily* undertook, extended through the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. According to the Minutes of the Conference, Liverpool and Manchester divided between them twenty years of his public life; Salford occupied six; Stockport three; and Leeds six; so that he appears to have spent thirty-five years in five localities. In every one of these places he was received with the utmost cordiality; he was treated with every mark of confidence and respect; the vast population of these towns, and the spacious chapels that were situated in them, afforded him ample scope for the exercise of his pulpit-talents; and until he was disabled by age, in no place, so far as we can learn, was there the slightest diminution of his popularity, except, perhaps, in one or two cases, when the infliction of a righteous discipline upon delinquents gave offence to the adversaries of Christian order.

From Wakefield he removed, in the year 1817, to Liverpool, where he remained till 1820. Here he was often brought into profitable intercourse with Dr. Adam Clarke, who was then resident at Millbrook, in the neighbourhood, and was engaged in writing his Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. While he was one in mind and heart with his own colleagues, in the true spirit of Chris-

tian liberality he cultivated the friendship of Ministers of other denominations, especially that of Dr. Raffles and Dr. Stewart. He was scrupulously diligent in fulfilling his appointments in his own Circuit, and, at the same time, was always ready to serve his friends at a distance when they applied to him for aid. Many were the journeys that he took for this purpose, and great was the self-denial that he practised in leaving his family, and in travelling by night and by day, to assist in the formation of Missionary Societies, to preach at the opening of new chapels, and to plead the cause of local charities. During his stay at Liverpool, at this time, the plan of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed, to which all the District Societies already existing were in future to be regarded as auxiliaries; the management of the General Society being, from year to year, confided to a mixed Committee of Ministers and laymen. From that time the Methodist Missions have steadily advanced in extent, efficiency, and in public estimation.

In Liverpool Mr. Newton was happily exempted from the difficulties and perils which pressed heavily upon several of his brethren in some other parts of Lancashire, particularly in the manufacturing districts. Provisions were still dear, trade was in a state of depression, many thousands of the poor were out of employment; some refusing to work unless their wages were increased, and others unable to obtain any kind of occupation, and therefore, with their families, in a state of destitution. In these circumstances, their passions were inflamed by the speeches of demagogues, and by democratic writers, who attributed all the sufferings of the labouring classes to the Government of the country, and the selfishness of the rich. Peaceable

people lived in constant terror ; and the Ministers of religion, who warned their hearers against acts of violence, and recommended submission to law and order, were held up as objects of reprobation. Hence they were in continual danger of personal violence, and the effect of their ministry was greatly neutralized ; many of the poor being equally unwilling to hear them, and to receive their message. To these things he alludes in the following letter, which he wrote on his arrival at home, after attending the Conference of 1819 at Bristol, and his entrance upon his third year in Liverpool. He returned by way of Derby, which for some years he had been accustomed annually to visit, for the purpose of preaching in behalf of the funds of the King-street chapel in that town, where he had also formed an enduring friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Turner. Addressing them, under the date of August 31st, 1819, he says :—

“My friends here were pleased to give me a most cordial reception on my return to them ; and I feel it my privilege to serve them in the Gospel of our common Lord.

“Manchester was in a state of awful distraction when I arrived there on the day I left you. You have doubtless seen the accounts of the events of that day in the public papers. An attempt, by advertisements, was made to hold a meeting for Reform here yesterday ; but I understand scarcely any one attended. In Manchester and its vicinity it is Luddism under another name. I hope our Societies will be preserved from the demoralizing infatuation. We are expecting a prosperous year. May God give us the desire of our hearts ! The revival and extension of pure and undefiled religion are the only things to effect a ‘ radical reform ’ in all classes of society.”

With the concluding sentiment of this letter the faithful friends of Methodism in Manchester entirely agreed; and therefore, while the agents of mischief were putting forth the most strenuous efforts to establish an infidel democracy, under the name of "radical reform," *they* resolved to provide increased accommodation for the Gospel ministry, and the celebration of Christian worship. For this purpose they entered into subscriptions for the purchase of land, and the erection of a large chapel in Grosvenor-street, which was at length completed, and dedicated to God. Many faithful men engaged heartily in this enterprise, among whom Messrs. Wood, Marris, Stocks, Lomas, Chappell, Westhead, Fildes, and Rea stood pre-eminent. The writer of this narrative, in connexion with that thoroughly liberal and honest man, the late Samuel Stocks, Esq., then of Manchester, but afterwards of Wakefield, had the honour of collecting nearly all the funds that were raised for the attainment of this Christian object. Many a month did they devote to the service; and when Mr. Newton had spent his three years in Liverpool, he removed with his family to Manchester, in 1820, and took up his residence in Grosvenor-street, near the new chapel, where his effective ministry mainly contributed to collect a large and respectable congregation. Here he remained three years, preaching with his wonted ability, and exerting all his energies to promote that spiritual religion which is an effectual antidote to ruinous vices in all their varieties of form, which political changes can never cure; and his labours were eminently successful, both in Manchester and many other distant places, which he continued to visit with unabated diligence.

At this time the spirit of insubordination was still rife in

Manchester and the neighbourhood, and many of the labouring poor looked upon every man as an enemy, who did not join with them in railing against the Government of the country, and against the wealthy classes generally; and Mr. Newton, as he had formerly been at Holmfirth, was regarded by his friends as a marked man, and fears were entertained for his safety. One evening, after he had preached at Cheetham-Hill, and was about to return to Manchester, a person in the vestry of the chapel kindly offered to accompany him along the lonely part of the road. Mr. Newton declined the favour, alleging that his friend would have to return alone. He had not gone far on his way, before a large dog came to him, and followed him very closely. Soon after, he saw two suspicious-looking men standing upon the footpath. The dog eyed them both with great care; and the men, seeing the formidable animal, divided right and left, so as to allow the Preacher and his faithful attendant to pass unmolested. He resolved that if his canine friend should follow him home, he would reward him with a good supper; but as he entered into Manchester, the animal disappeared, and he saw him no more. Mr. Newton, who believed, on the authority of his Saviour, that the very hairs of his head were all numbered, could not ascribe this occurrence to a blind chance, but to the providence of God. He therefore recognised in it a motive to gratitude for the past, and of trust for the future.

The full benefit of Mr. Newton's labours will never be ascertained in this world. He was not only a means of the conversion of ungodly men, who became useful as private members of the church, but of raising up efficient Ministers, who, in their turn, became a blessing to multitudes; and while he was successful in calling forth the prayers and

liberal pecuniary contributions of the people in behalf of Missions, under his sermons and speeches able men were induced to offer themselves as ambassadors to the Heathen. Of this number is the Rev. Robert Young, as appears from the subjoined letter, which he addressed to the writer of these pages:—

“In the year 1820 it was my privilege to hear Mr. Newton preach a deeply-interesting sermon at North Shields, which was a means of giving an entirely new direction to my mind. It was my intention to enter into business; and I visited Tynemouth for the purpose of making some preliminary arrangements in order to that end, when a large placard attracted my attention, announcing that the Rev. Robert Newton would preach that evening at North Shields. At once I determined to hear that celebrated Preacher, but found it difficult to obtain admission into the chapel because of the crowd. His text was, Psalm cxxvi. 6: ‘He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.’ In expounding and applying that beautiful passage of holy writ, he described the Christian Missionary as a sorrowful sower, and a joyful reaper; and while he spoke, the hand of the Lord was with him, and the people were deeply impressed. I stood in the aisle, for I could not obtain a seat: and *there* and *then* was I clearly and deeply convinced that I was called of God to engage in the Mission work, and that a refusal would peril my salvation. It was a solemn hour: a crisis in my history had arrived; there was a struggle in my mind, but it was soon over; and, in the name of the Lord, I resolved to yield to the conviction of duty. In carrying it out, I have had to visit the four quarters of the globe, and to pass

through many dangers, both by land and by water ; but I have never repented. On the contrary, I have invariably regarded the vows which I then made with satisfaction and thankfulness. To commemorate the change which then took place in my purposes and arrangements, and to express my admiration of the gifted Minister to whom, under God, I am so much indebted, I named one of my sons Robert Newton ; and it is to me a matter of gratitude and joy that the Lord has graciously called him to the office and work of the ministry in the Wesleyan body.”

In the year 1821, Mr. Newton was made the Secretary to the Conference ; an office which he often afterwards filled, and always with credit to himself and advantage to that venerable body, whom it was his delight to serve. His noble voice and calm self-possession gave him a mighty advantage in conducting the business of that assembly ; and at the same time he had the entire confidence of all its members as to his perfect uprightness. No one suspected him of any sinister purpose.

In the following year, 1822, his connexion with Ireland commenced, from which most important benefits resulted. He preached his first sermon there in the month of June in that year. The direct occasion of his visit was the opening of a new Methodist chapel in the town of Bandon, and the holding of the Irish Conference. The following letter, which he addressed to the Rev. Thomas Waugh, will show the spirit in which he undertook that service and began his ministry in the sister island :—

“ May 1st, 1822.—I hope to be in Dublin on the 23d of June. During that week I might visit a few places in my way to Bandon, and spend the 30th with you. Will you be kind enough to confer with Mr. Tobias on the

subject? Tell him I very much wished to make arrangements to leave Manchester a week sooner, but I find it impracticable. While I am with you, I shall be at your disposal. Appoint me *where* and *as* you please. I am your servant for the Lord's sake. I rejoice to hear that the prospect of good brightens before you in Ireland. I promise myself much pleasure and profit in my visit to your country. The Lord direct my way to you!"

His sermon at the opening of the new chapel in Bandon was founded upon Psalm xxvi. 8: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth."

From Bandon he repaired to Dublin, to meet the Irish Preachers, according to the direction of the British Conference. Among them he commanded the highest esteem, and won for himself the affection of many a warm heart; and in Dublin his preaching was made a blessing to thousands. With respect to him and the President, whom he came to attend, the Irish Preachers say, in their Address to the English Conference: "Our gratitude and obligations are enlarged towards you, on behalf of our truly pious and excellent President, brother George Marsden, and his excellent companion, brother Robert Newton. Their labours, zeal, wisdom, and talents, have filled us with gladness, and edified us in love. For them we bless God, and thank you."

Often did Mr. Newton visit Ireland in following years, and he attended at least twenty-three Irish Conferences. Here some of his tenderest friendships were formed; and here many persons were, through his faithful ministry, turned to righteousness, and made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Among others who were saved through

his faithful preaching must be ranked at least one man who sustains the ministerial office in the Irish Connexion, and a lady who occupies a distinguished rank in general society, and adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour. His visits to Ireland were more than welcome; they were anticipated with joy, and are remembered with grateful satisfaction.

In the spring of 1823 Mr. Newton visited Cornwall, for the purpose of pleading the cause of Missions among the miners of that county, taking Exeter on his way. On his arrival at Truro, he addressed to his wife a hasty letter, dated March 14th, in which he says: "This is Friday afternoon; and it is really the first opportunity I have had, since I left Grosvenor-street, to tell those who are the most dear to me, that I am well. It was half-past eight o'clock in the evening of Monday when I arrived in Birmingham, and about the same time on Tuesday evening when I entered Bristol. After securing my place for Exeter, I spent the evening with my old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, who were very kind to a poor traveller. I slept soundly till Wednesday morning, when I set off for Exeter, where I arrived just in time to take a hasty cup of tea, and run to the pulpit. Churchmen, Dissenters, &c., had assembled to hear 'this man from Manchester.' The Lord helped me, and I hope that good was done.

"After supper on Wednesday night, I got into the mail-coach for Plymouth, where I found myself the next morning at six o'clock. I took breakfast at Plymouth-Dock at seven, and then crossed the passage to Tor-Point. The scenery there is beautiful. Yesterday, I arrived at St. Austell, in time to preach at three o'clock; and we had a good meeting at six. This morning I have come in a

chaise with Mr. Close, a Missionary from Madras. I preached at twelve: we are now about to dine, and shall hold a meeting at six. A message has just come, saying that the dinner waits. My beloved wife must therefore imagine that she hears me say everything that the heart of her own husband could dictate.

“I believe my journey will do me good. I hope you will take care of yourself, and that we shall meet in due time, grateful to the God of all our mercies. Give their father’s love to all the dear children. God bless my dearest Elizabeth!”

A Cornish correspondent, in the *Missionary Notices* of the next month, reports: “We were favoured with a visit by the Rev. Robert Newton, who, during his short stay, kindly preached, and assisted us in our Anniversary Branch Missionary Meetings at St. Austell on the 13th of March, and at Truro on the 14th; he preached at Gwennap on the 15th, and at Camborne and Penzance on the 16th; preached at Helstone, and attended the Anniversary there, on the 18th; preached at Tuckingmill, and attended the Redruth Anniversary, on the 19th; and with unabated ardour affectionately bestowed similar labours at Falmouth on the 20th, and at Bodmin on the 21st. The large congregations that attended at every place, the lively and serious devotion which uniformly marked our assemblies, the liberal contributions in aid of the Missions, exceeding those of our former Anniversaries, the growing concern to promote the cause of Missions everywhere manifest, with the truly Christian concurrence in this good work evinced by Ministers and members of other denominations, could not but prove highly gratifying to those who visited us.” In some of these gigantic services, Mr. Newton was

attended by the Rev. Titus Close ; but, his health having been seriously impaired in India, he was not able to follow his companion with equal steps.

Mr. Newton returned home uninjured by his extensive journeyings, and with his spirit rather refreshed than exhausted by extraordinary labours in the pulpit and on the platform, in the midst of dense assemblies. But he felt that a Missionary deputation to Cornwall in those times was no sinecure ; and he was amply compensated for his toils by the pious zeal and liberality of the Cornish Methodists, who in common with himself sincerely loved the Missionary cause.

He arrived at home in time to take part in the Annual Meeting of the Auxiliary Society for the Manchester District, which was an occasion of high and holy excitement, as is amply proved by the following letter which he afterwards received :—“ I attended your excellent meeting on Monday ; and from all I then heard and felt, I was induced to empty my pockets. I attended your adjourned meeting on Tuesday evening ; and from all I then heard and felt, the same conduct was repeated, and my pockets were emptied a second time. I then returned home, to muse on all I had heard, and to indulge in the feelings which had been excited. I thought, ‘ Have I done what I could ? ’ I inquired, ‘ What do I possess ? ’ I found myself possessed of a sovereign, a shilling, sixpence, and a penny-piece. These I enclose ; and this is the last penny I have in the world, which I cheerfully give to such a cause ; while I can trust in God, who is so worthy to be trusted.”

This year also, as usual, Mr. Newton lent his efficient aid at the Annual Meeting of the general Society in London in the beginning of May ; and under the date of the 7th

of June he says, in a letter to his friend Mr. Turner, of Derby: "All my friends tell me that I am killing myself. I have attended thirty-eight Missionary Meetings, and travelled about two thousand three hundred miles, since the middle of March." He does not say how often he had preached during this time; and his sermons were never brief essays delivered without emotion. His Missionary sermons especially were real intellectual efforts, comprehensive in their range of topics, and delivered with great animation; and his journeys were not then prosecuted in easy and commodious carriages on railways, nor with railway speed.

The Conference of 1823 was held in Sheffield. Three years before, the Rev. John Emory had attended the English Conference, as the Representative of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America; when he was very cordially received in that character, and gave such accounts of the spread of true religion on that vast continent, as called forth expressions of thankfulness to the Giver of all good; and, at the same time, the devout spirit and sanctified intelligence of Mr. Emory commanded more than ordinary respect. The British Conference then rejoiced to recognise "that great principle, that the Wesleyan Methodists are one body in every part of the world;" it declared its cordial pleasure in receiving a Representative from the General Conference in America; and pledged itself that, "prior to the time of the next General Conference in America," it would "appoint one or more" of its "body to visit" its brethren there, "and to be present at their General Conference."

The time was now come for this pledge to be redeemed.

Every one felt the desirableness of selecting one of the best specimens of a Methodist Preacher for this service; and every eye was turned to Mr. Newton: "for there was not among" the spiritual sons of Wesley "a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than" almost "any of the people" in the Conference, both mentally and in respect of his bodily stature. Many of his friends, therefore, urged him to consent that he should be put in nomination before his brethren; but he peremptorily declined the honour, swayed, not only by a feeling of modesty, but by domestic considerations. His family was large; many of his children were of tender age; and his frequent absence from home had already thrown quite as much care and responsibility upon Mrs. Newton as it was right that she should bear. The force of these reasons was generally acknowledged; and the Rev. Richard Reece was appointed to the service, with the Rev. John Hannah as his companion. To these facts Mr. Newton refers in the following extract from a letter which he addressed to Mrs. Newton before the Conference concluded:—"A Committee, consisting of all the men who have been Presidents, with Mr. Robert Miller and myself, have met twice respecting the mission to America. I have been obliged to put a direct negative on my going, on the ground of domestic circumstances. In doing this my conscience and feelings are in unison. Your heart can tell what mine felt when I was urged and re-urged to go to America. But I am sure I have done right. I hope the year before us will be in all respects happy and prosperous. God bless you and the dear children!"

At the close of the Conference he returned to his family

in Manchester, whence he removed to Salford, where he was appointed to labour during the next twelve months, and where he was so happy with the people, and the people with him, that he remained three years, the utmost limit that the constitution of the Connexion would allow. Here he applied himself to his work with renewed ardour; and not many weeks elapsed before it pleased God to give him fruit of his labour, especially in the awakening and the conversion of sinners; and at the same time his ministry was in as urgent request all over the kingdom as it ever had been, and his willingness to help all who requested his aid was undiminished. A specimen of his activity is given in a letter which he addressed to his friend Turner, of Derby, and which bears the date of October 4th, 1823. He says: "I am engaged to preach for our Missions at Wolverhampton on the evening of the 7th, and that is the reason why you are puzzled respecting my route. I go by an early coach from Wolverhampton to Lichfield, and there take a Birmingham coach to Burton. Our Quarterly Meeting will be held on Monday, and I must be here again, if the Lord will, to preach on the 9th. So you see I have no rest for the sole of my foot. God has given me some seals of my ministry since I came to Salford. To His name be all the praise!"

He concluded his first year in the Salford Circuit, as he began it, in most strenuous and unremitting efforts to advance the work of Christ, both at home and abroad; and when he met his brethren in the Conference of 1824, which was held in Leeds, by their free and unsolicited suffrages they placed him in the presidential chair; the highest honour that they had it in their power to confer.

This honour they felt that he had fairly won by his extraordinary services ; and as to the trust which it involved, every one was persuaded that it was safe in his hands ; for a man more cordially attached to the tenets and economy of Wesleyan Methodism did not exist.

His entire conduct in the chair of the Conference justified the act which had placed him there. Humility, meekness, urbanity, and gentleness, combined with a becoming dignity and firmness, marked all his official acts, and indeed his whole demeanour. Even in the chair which Mr. Wesley occupied, and in which some of the most eminent of his spiritual sons had been placed, Robert Newton appeared to advantage, as every one that saw him there confessed.

As the President of the Conference, his official engagements through the year were greatly increased ; but he was blessed with strength, both of mind and body, for every duty ; and his willingness was equal to his power ; so that he never shrank from any labour that devolved upon him, or that he voluntarily undertook. The following letter, which he wrote towards the end of the year, shows something of his labours, and of the state of the Connexion which was under his care. It was addressed to his sister Ann, who had been recently married, and who now bore the name of Mrs. Ireland :—

“November 27th, 1824.—You certainly should have heard from me sooner, had not the very great press of public business prevented. Allow me now, however, to present mine and Mrs. Newton’s congratulations, and our best wishes for the mutual happiness of Mr. Ireland and yourself. I am happy that my dear mother is with you ; and I earnestly hope that the step you have taken, and

which is better late than never, will be for the comfort of all.

“Greatly do I rejoice to hear of the prosperity of the work of God in the Whitby Circuit generally, and especially in your vicinity. The Connexion, I am happy to say, is in a healthy and thriving state. But though the work continues to prosper, the workmen are taken away. Mr. Wrigley has just finished his course; Mr. Griffith is very ill; Mr. Atmore will be under the necessity of retiring at the time of the next Conference; and I greatly fear that my colleague, Mr. Riles, will be obliged to do the same. I have just called out Mr. William Bunting to supply his place. He is a young man of great promise, but his health is delicate.

“How soon will this mortal story be ended! God help us to work while it is day! I have had many long journeys lately, by night and by day, and am indeed a wonder to myself, that my health is as good as it was when I first entered the field as a recruit at eighteen. But this cannot always continue. In my turn, I must expect to go into winter quarters.”

At the Bristol Conference of 1825, he was divested of his presidential cares and responsibilities, but returned to his Circuit with the full purpose to put forth all his strength in the service of his Lord. The reduction of his official duties left him at liberty to make a greater number of voluntary engagements; and his ear was always open to the applications of Trustees of chapels, and the friends of Missions. Yet the powers of the strongest men have their limits; and the health of even Robert Newton failed in the year 1825, after he had returned from the Conference. Exaggerated accounts of his condition were soon put into

circulation, and a deep and general sympathy in his behalf was excited. As soon as he was convalescent, he wrote a letter to his faithful and valued friend, Mr. Turner, of Derby, in which he gives the following account of his state:—

“August 20th, 1825.—By the merciful providence of God, I am *now* able to inform you that I am in the land of the living. A bilious fever was coming upon me when I left you. It was all that I could do to reach this place (Southport). I was immediately ordered to bed, where for several days I knew not how it would go with me. My medical attendant has since told me, ‘It had nearly been a finish.’ Thank God, the fever has now subsided, and, though very weak, I am getting a little strength daily. But when I shall recover all that I have lost, I know not. To me this is a new scene; it being the first time in my life that I have been seriously ill. I hope, however, that it will be made a blessing to me. O, how valuable is that faith in the blood of the covenant, which makes salvation our own! May we always have it in possession, and in lively exercise! What is all religion without this? But an empty name.

“I have felt much for my dear wife. The shock has almost overwhelmed her. Had not the Lord graciously comforted her mind, she must have inevitably sunk under it.

“I long to be in my work again, and hope in a week or two to be able to do a little. But all extra service, of course, must be for some time to come absolutely declined. Perhaps my doctor would blame me, if he knew that I had been writing; but I was anxious to tell you how I am.”

The excellence of Mr. Newton’s constitution appeared in his speedy recovery. In little more than a month, he says

to the same correspondent: "My health continues to improve, so that my work is easy to me. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.' I feel increasing delight in publishing the glad tidings of salvation to my fellow-sinners. May I obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful!"

On the 21st of October, he announced his complete recovery in a letter to his sister Ann, who, with his other relations, had been greatly alarmed by the incorrect rumours which they had heard concerning the nature and effects of his complaint.

"I am sorry," he says, "that I could not write by the last evening's post, that I might a few hours sooner have relieved your minds, and the minds of my other relations, from the distress you have felt on my account. I had an attack of bilious fever immediately on my return from the Conference, which I believe was induced by the excessive heat and confinement that I endured in attending the Irish and British Conferences. The fever continued four or five days; but, I thank God, my reason was never for a moment disturbed, or interrupted in its exercise. I was but one Sabbath out of my work, and have not been an hour unwell since.

"I think you will not fear much on account of my health, when I tell you, that on Monday last I went from hence to Burslem, where I preached for the chapel-trust in the evening. From thence I went to Wednesbury the next day, where I spoke in the Missionary Meeting in the afternoon, and preached in the evening. From Wednesbury I went the next morning to Lichfield, preached at eleven o'clock, and spoke at the Missionary Meetings at half-past two and half-past six. Yesterday I came from

Lichfield to this place (Salford), a distance of seventy miles, preached, and attended the Leaders' Meeting; and then united dinner, tea, and supper, in one hearty meal, at ten o'clock at night.

"Through the abundant mercy of God, we are all in good health; and are under the strongest obligations of gratitude to Him from whom all good proceeds, and to whom all praise belongs. I rejoice to hear that our revered parent is so well.

"I am greatly obliged to my numerous friends in various parts of the kingdom, and even in the Isle of Man, who, when they heard that I was ill of a fever, assembled together in chapels and elsewhere, to unite in prayer to the Head of the church for my recovery. I could not have believed that a few days of illness in so insignificant and unworthy a creature, as I feel myself to be, could have excited such a strong sensation through the United Kingdom. The letters which I have received, first of sympathy, and since of congratulation, from various parts of the Connexion, have made an impression on my heart which can never be effaced. I am sure I owe much to the prayers of the Preachers and people; and my prayer is, that my spared life and recovered health may be unreservedly devoted to Him whose I am, and whom I serve."

In this letter, it will be observed, he speaks favourably of his mother's health; but, within a few months, her redeemed and sanctified spirit fled to the heavenly paradise. He thus speaks of her departure in a letter to Mr. Turner, under the date of February 17th, 1826:—

"The last week I was in the North, to see my dear mother. She had expressed a great desire to see me once more; and I just arrived in time. I found her 'all praise,

all meekness, and all love.' She departed, without a sigh or struggle, in sure and certain hope of everlasting life, aged eighty-three years.

"I am glad to hear that there is such an opening at Ashbourne. I have not, however, known an instance where a hired Local Preacher, for such a purpose, has answered well. I would rather advise that the Local Preachers in your Circuit should occasionally supply some old-established places, that your Travelling Preachers might visit these villages; and then state the case to the next Conference, saying what could be done towards supporting a single Preacher on that ground. It is of great importance that Methodist discipline, as well as Methodist doctrine, should be introduced wherever Societies are formed."

CHAPTER VII.

AT the Conference of 1826, Mr. Newton was again appointed to labour in Liverpool, the Circuit being then divided into two. Here he remained during the next six years, spending three years in each Circuit; the first three in Liverpool South, and the second three in Liverpool North.

Through the whole of these six years he continued his public services without the slightest abatement. Early and late was he upon the coach, preaching once or twice every day when he could leave his own Circuit, and never omitting his duty when at home. His absence from his family now began to be painfully felt by Mrs. Newton, who, when she referred to the subject, was as often reminded with a smile of the agreement into which she entered with him before their marriage, that she would never hinder him in his work, by requiring him to preach even one sermon less on her account. To this plea she at first responded with a sigh; but habit seemed, at length, to abate the pain of separation; and the care of her eight children, who were all educated at home, so fully occupied every hour, as, in a great measure, to prevent her from feeling the loneliness of her situation: yet she could not but desire more of his aid in the task of training their offspring.

During his superintendency of the Liverpool South Circuit, an incident occurred which places his uprightness and fidelity in a striking light. A lovefeast was appointed to be held in the Pitt-street chapel, and a com-

paratively poor man was one of the door-keepers, whose duty it was to inspect the Society-tickets of the people as they entered. A wealthy member of the Society, forgetting at the time the respect which is due to rule, to office, and even to human nature, attempted to enter into the chapel without presenting his certificate of membership; and, on being expostulated with, rudely pushed the door-keeper aside, and otherwise treated him with contumely. The matter was complained of in the Leaders' Meeting; and the Class-Leader of the offender apologized for the outrage, stating that the man was sorry for what he had done. Mr. Newton observed, that this was not sufficient: the offence was public; it was an open contempt of rule and order; and an apology merely sent through a third party, and not even offered to the man who had been personally aggrieved and resisted in the discharge of his duty, could not be accepted. Wealth should rather be regarded as an incentive to civility, than as a justification of rudeness. The offender attended the next meeting of the Leaders, confessed that he had done wrong, and promised never again to transgress in like manner.

On the 30th of June, 1826, his friend Mr. Butterworth died in the Lord. He had risen from comparatively humble life, by the blessing of God upon his own talents and industry, to wealth and influence, both of which he sacredly devoted to the service of God; being at once a devout Christian, and a liberal and energetic philanthropist. In the House of Commons he invariably appeared as the friend of the oppressed and of religious liberty: he was one of the Treasurers of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and an active member of the Com-

mittee of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and was, for many years, the efficient Leader of a class of young men, belonging to the Methodist Society, in connexion with the chapel in Great Queen-street, whom he was accustomed to meet at an early hour on the Sunday morning. Many a youth, exposed to the snares of London, was, at these meetings, guarded from temptation, and trained to piety and usefulness.

At the Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in London, held the following year, Mr. Newton paid a just and grateful tribute to the character of his friend, and at the same time gave some interesting notices concerning himself. "We are this day," said he, "recording our mercies, and uniting in devout thanksgivings to Him from whom all good counsels and all just works do proceed; and I rejoice that Divine Providence is furnishing us with laurels, and we have lived to wear them; yet the same Providence is this day calling us to entwine the cypress with the laurel. For, after all, the victory is this day turned into mourning. I cannot forget, and this assembly cannot forget, who occupied that chair the last year, and who occupied it for several years before. We have been told in the Report, that we now stand upon his ashes. He is no more! He rests from his toil; he has finished his course, and is now a happy spirit before the throne of God. 'Being dead,' however, 'he yet speaketh.' He is dead; but he lives in the affectionate remembrance of the religious public generally, and particularly in the affectionate remembrance of his friends who knew him best. It was my privilege to enjoy the personal friendship of the late Joseph Butterworth. For some fifteen or twenty years past I have been entertained,

on my visits to town, under his hospitable roof. It has been my privilege to witness his personal and domestic piety, to see family-worship conducted under his roof with such solemnity and fervour as, perhaps I am not saying too much when I say, I have never elsewhere witnessed. He lives in the example which he has left of extraordinary diligence and of quenchless zeal and ardour in the cause of religion generally, and of Christian Missions in particular. May we all be taught to apply our hearts to wisdom; and when the mortal hour with us shall arrive, may we have nothing to do but to die, and to be saved with the power of an endless life!"

It might be fairly expected that the Missionary spirit would not be allowed to decline in any Circuit with which Mr. Newton stood in an official connexion. Among the Methodists at Liverpool that spirit was singularly active during his residence among them, as will appear from the statements which he made from year to year, when he attended the Annual Meetings of the parent Society in London. In the year 1829 he said: "At Liverpool several of our friends, some time ago, resolved to double their subscriptions; and at our last Anniversary many others determined to follow their example; so that we had an increase of about £150. At the Pitt-street chapel, where about £40 were collected, the sum of £140 has this year been raised. I state this to the honour of my excellent friends there. When I heard the remarks respecting the claims which the natives made to some of the Missionaries, it brought to my mind the case of two African Chiefs, who disputed which of them should have the first Missionary that would arrive. One of them said that he was descended from an English woman, who was rescued from shipwreck off their coast;

and therefore he had the first claim. The other said, 'It was my father that rescued your mother; and therefore I have the stronger claim.' I put this question to the meeting at Liverpool, where there were several honest tars, who seemed to feel a deep interest in the question. Their eyes were filled with tears; and one of them exclaimed, in the honest simplicity of his heart, 'Both, Sir; both, Sir; both, to be sure!' We had ample proof in the collection which followed, that this was not idle talk."

Twelve months afterwards he said: "I have the pleasure to state, that at Liverpool our subscriptions this year have exceeded those of the twelve previous months by nearly eighty guineas. A small box has been put into my hand, which reminds me of a prodigious Missionary chest, which two sons of Hercules exerted their physical force to bring on the platform at Liverpool. When opened, it was found to contain £30 in halfpence, which came from the yard of a stonemason, who urged his men, when he paid them their wages, to put something into the Missionary chest, to promote this good cause. The men acted accordingly, and in about six months the sum of £30 was contributed. I may mention another fact: A woman, without saying a word, put into my hand a small silk bag. I found worked upon it, 'The widow's mite.' It contained ten guineas. At one meeting I received a note in these words: 'The writer believes that the cause of Missions is pre-eminently the cause of God, and is persuaded that the set time to favour that cause is come. She has the pleasure to subscribe herself,—A friend to Missions.' It contained £100." He added, "Some kind friend has just conveyed to me this note: 'A debtor's ninth instalment, £50.'"

These facts, which are a mere specimen of the communi-

cations which he was accustomed to make at the Missionary Meetings which he attended, show most impressively the spirit of the man, and the estimation in which he was held. The liberal friends of the cause, charmed with his addresses, delighted to make him the medium through which their bounty was conveyed to the general fund. Sums of every amount, according to the ability of the people, were given under the exciting influence of his speeches, not with reluctance, and from a painful sense of duty, but with a cheerfulness which eminently proved that true "charity is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

During two of the years that Mr. Newton spent in the Liverpool South Circuit, Mr. Watson was in Manchester; and he requested Mr. Watson to take part in the opening services of an important chapel in Liverpool, most probably that in Stanhope-street, and found him unwilling to promise. In these circumstances the following letter was written. We copy it from Mr. Watson's autograph; but it has no date, and the address has been torn off. It was not addressed to Mr. Newton, (for he is spoken of in the third person,) but was evidently intended for his use. The document is valuable, as showing the estimation in which the writer held Mr. Newton's services at the Anniversaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, and the humble estimate which one of the greatest Preachers in England had formed concerning himself.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"I AM exceedingly sorry that your plan of opening is not made up without me; and that my pleasurable anticipation of attending you as a spectator and hearer is cut off.

“But what can I do? I am not in the habit of speaking lightly; and I am sure I never held back from any good thing, in order to be courted into it. That is not my foible; and I have enough without it. But it is my serious conviction that occasional services are not for me. In the south I have flattered myself with being tolerably acceptable; but I know I have no hold upon Liverpool and Manchester, where more of physical energy than I possess is requisite to produce any effect. I have no nerves, no confidence, no sermon adapted to any such occasion, and no hope of getting one. If you knew how often I have disappointed and failed in the last six years, and the tortures inflicted upon me by the kind partiality of friends, putting me forward to stations for which I have no adaptation, you would leave me alone.

“You say Mr. Newton is grieved; and I would not appear ungrateful to him, to whom, whilst I had the care of the London Missionary Anniversary, I so often owed it, that, upon his consenting to take a part in the services, all the onerous anxieties of that meeting were taken off: to say nothing of my very great personal respect for him.

“As to my Liverpool friends, I am sure that I so much admire their zeal in this good work, that, if I felt I could do them any good, I would not refuse, but even offer it.

“But, with all the convictions and feelings I have, what can I do? I can do nothing to purpose: but, if you cannot make up your services to your minds, Mr. Newton may take the risk of putting the Sunday evening service upon me;—in which case, I will not trouble him to send a supply for the Sunday in my place; as I can preach at Oxford-road in the forenoon, and get to Liverpool by the evening.”

As a specimen of the effects which were produced by Mr. Newton's occasional visits to particular places, and of the respect in which he was held by the people whom he thus favoured, we may refer to the case of Derby. He visited this town, for the first time, in the year 1808; when he preached at the Anniversary of the Methodist chapel in King-street. In the year 1810 he repeated his visit, and continued to do so, from year to year, to the end of his life; attending Missionary Meetings, preaching in behalf of the trust-funds of the chapel, and oftener than once affording his aid at the Meetings of the Auxiliary Bible Society. He knew the necessities and desires of the Derby friends, and not unfrequently informed Mr. Turner when he had a vacant day, so that he could serve them without serious inconvenience: and his presence with them was always hailed with delight.

It is still more important to state, that his ministry in Derby was so sanctioned by the blessing of God, that many persons, under his sermons, were made "wise unto salvation." In places far distant from Derby, he often met with individuals who informed him that they received their first religious awakenings when they heard him preach in that town. Many years ago, a party of infidels there held their meetings on the evening of the Christian Sabbath, for the diffusion of their noxious tenets; and foremost in the godless ranks was a man who had once been a professor of religion, but had fallen into sin, cast away even the semblance of piety, and openly denied the Lord that bought him. He had a brother, who, having come from a distance to hear Mr. Newton preach at the Anniversary of the King-street chapel, persuaded him to attend the service on the Sunday

morning. Mr. Newton preached from the First Psalm ; and, in the character of the “ungodly,” the “sinners,” and especially of the “scornful,” the infidel recognised his own picture, and was so enraged that he confessed he felt a strong desire to drag the Preacher out of the pulpit. He went, however, again in the afternoon ; and then the arrows of conviction so pierced his guilty heart, that he had no rest until he sought and found the forgiving mercy of God, through faith in the sacrifice of Christ. He joined the Methodist Society, and laboured for many years as an effective Local Preacher.

Under a grateful impression of Mr. Newton’s kindness in visiting them, and especially of the value of his services, the Trustees, in the year 1829, presented to him a silver salver, in an appropriate case, as a token of the respect which they cherished towards him. The plate bore the following inscription :—

PRESENTED
TO
THE REVEREND ROBERT NEWTON,
BY THE
TRUSTEES OF THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST CHAPEL,
KING-STREET,
DERBY ;
AS A TOKEN OF THE HIGH AND GRATEFUL SENSE THEY
ENTERTAIN OF THE VALUABLE SERVICES HE HAS
RENDERED TO THE CAUSE OF RELIGION IN THAT
TOWN AND ITS VICINITY, BY PREACHING
THE ANNIVERSARY SERMONS OF THE
ABOVE CHAPEL FOR THE LAST
TWENTY YEARS. 1829.

This very handsome present he acknowledged in the following characteristic letter, which he addressed to the Trustees, through their mutual friend Mr. Turner:—

“Words are at the best but signs of things; and they are sometimes but very imperfect signs of the things which they are employed to represent. The truth and force of this I feel at this moment. What have I done to merit such an expression of the kindness of my old friends, the Trustees of the King-street chapel in Derby? Be assured it was by me as unlooked for as undeserved. I cannot, however, refuse to accept this ‘proof of your love.’ The inscription may be read by those who are dear to me when my name is written in the dust. Will you present my sincere and grateful acknowledgments to those kind friends who (with yourself) have laid me under such a weight of obligation?”

More than once has it happened, that, after preaching three times to crowded congregations on the Sabbath-day in Derby, Mr. Newton has left the town, taking scarcely any rest, to visit a distant place the next day. An instance of this kind occurred the year after that in which this letter was written. He fulfilled his engagements in Derby, and was under a promise to preach the next day at a place in Gloucestershire. To accomplish this, he was driven during the night to Lichfield, and thence to Birmingham, where he took a coach the next morning at seven o’clock, and was in time to occupy the pulpit, according to the promise which he had previously made. Many similar cases occurred in connexion with his visits to Derby.

It was not to oblige old friends, or to address

large and wealthy congregations only, that he made these sacrifices of ease and convenience. He was as accessible to young Ministers, as to his more aged acquaintance; and ready to serve the smallest and most needy congregations that might request his aid. A few months after he had taken this journey into Gloucestershire, the Rev. John Tindall, then in the first year of his itinerant labours, applied to him, requesting him to preach in behalf of the trust-funds of the Methodist chapel at Redditch. His reply, which was full of kindness, stated that he had no evening at liberty, but a Saturday evening, which he feared would be inconvenient to the people; but if he could on that evening render them any service, he would readily visit them, provided he could obtain a conveyance the next morning to Worcester,—a distance of upwards of twenty miles,—where he had engaged to preach on the Sabbath-day. The friends gladly accepted his offer: it was his first visit to the place; and a large congregation, including several of the most respectable persons in the neighbourhood, attended. The subject of the sermon was the sin of neglecting prayer: the word was with power; and there was reason to believe that of one person, at least, in the assembly, it might from that time be said,—which could not with truth have been said before,—“Behold, he prayeth.”

The Rev. Dr. Beecham, who was one of his colleagues in Liverpool, says: “The interest which Mr. Newton took in his Circuit and pastoral duties was not exceeded by the zeal with which he sought to promote the cause of Christ by his more public labours. He endeavoured, when at home, to make up, as far as possible, the lack of service which resulted from his frequent absence. Immediately

on his return from his long and arduous excursions, he threw himself into his Circuit work with a freshness which was surprising, and a zest which proved that he felt himself in his proper element; while he industriously redeemed the time by a close application to his duties as a Christian Pastor."

The Conference of 1832 was held in Liverpool: Mr. Newton was again placed in the chair of that venerable body. Eight years had elapsed since he last occupied that post of duty and of honour; and during this period, as formerly, he had given his brethren unvarying proof of fidelity to the cause of spiritual religion in its Methodistic form. He had surpassed all his brethren in laborious efforts to advance the common cause; and when the votes of the Conference had been counted, his election declared, and he, with his characteristic modesty, sat down in the chief seat of the assembly, every heart seemed to say, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour."

This Conference was a season of solemn interest. Previously to its assembling, the town of Liverpool had for some time been afflicted with the Asiatic cholera, the ravages of which were fearfully extensive in the crowded population of that vast mart of commerce, so that the place presented a scene of "lamentation, and mourning, and woe." During the sittings of the Preparatory Committees, a day of humiliation and prayer was observed by the congregation belonging to the Brunswick chapel, and the Ministers who were then present. At a prayer-meeting which was held in that place of worship, it appeared that the power of the Lord was present to heal. The spirit of prayer eminently rested upon the entire

assembly, and the men who led the devotions of the rest manifested an earnestness and a power of faith which words can never express. Many believed that the Lord would be entreated; and it is a fact, which was matter of general observation at the time, that from the day of this memorable meeting the pestilence gradually abated in Liverpool, till it entirely disappeared. Whatever sceptics may suggest, it is no vain thing to call upon the Lord.

When the Conference was ended, Mr. Newton and his family removed from Liverpool to Manchester, which was to be the field of his future labours. They left Liverpool with feelings such as they had never experienced in any of their former removals. Their eldest daughter was united in marriage to a Swiss merchant, then resident in Liverpool, who also sustained the office of Consul; and she who had hitherto attended her parents in their itinerancy must now be left behind. In a letter to his sister Ann, Mr. Newton said, in reference to the marriage of his child, "I never knew how much I loved her, till I gave her away."

Another event also occurred during their residence in Liverpool, which was forced upon their recollection when the time of their removal came,—the death of Mrs. Newton's mother. She was a widow, and spent the latter years of her life in Mr. Newton's family; and while they were in Liverpool, she engaged a house at Southport, for the benefit of the sea-breezes, where the children spent much of their time with her. She died in a good old age, honoured and lamented, and her remains were interred in the burying-ground that is connected with the Stanhope-street chapel, where Mr. Newton purchased a family-grave, in order that if any of those who stood in a tender relation

to him should die in that neighbourhood, they might be provided with a quiet resting-place. But such arrangements, however natural and praiseworthy, are matters of great uncertainty, so far as the families of Methodist Preachers are concerned. Their remains often sleep far asunder. Happy if they all meet in a world where there is no more death, and where family-graves are no longer needed!

The year of Mr. Newton's second presidency proved to be a season of great and affecting mortality among the Wesleyan Ministers of England, no less than thirty of them being called from their work to their reward; and of this number were some of the brightest ornaments of the body, and the most useful of their brethren. Dr. Adam Clarke died of cholera soon after the Conference; Mr. Thomas Stanley, and Mr. John James, died not long after of apoplexy; Mr. Watson followed soon afterwards; and other men of inferior note, but highly estimable for their talents and character, left their companions, with whom they had long been associated in ministerial labour, and went to join the glorified worshippers in the heavenly world. At the following Conference, tears were shed when the character and labours of these honoured fathers and brethren came under review.

When his year of office as President ended, Mr. Newton cheerfully resigned the authority with which he had been invested, and retired to an equality with his brethren. Through the year he had exerted himself with his wonted diligence and fidelity to serve the Connexion, at the head of which he had been placed; and he was still as able and as willing as ever to meet the wishes of all who might need his service.

At this Conference of 1833, he was re-appointed to the Grosvenor-street Circuit in Manchester ; but to meet his case with respect to his Circuit and the Connexion at large, a new arrangement was made. His services were in general demand from one end of the kingdom to the other ; and yet the Circuit to which he was appointed, and from which he received his salary, had claims upon him which he could not personally fulfil, unless the applications which were made to him from distant places were denied. During the year of his presidency which had just expired, a junior Minister lived in his family, for the purpose of assisting him in his correspondence and other engagements ; and it was now deemed advisable by the Conference, that this arrangement should continue. In this case the junior Minister might take Mr. Newton's week-night appointments, visit the sick and other members of the Society, and leave him at liberty to accept invitations to distant places according to his ability.

When this arrangement was made, Mr. Newton laid it down as a rule, from which he never would swerve, to preach in his own Circuit every Sabbath-day through the year, except during the sittings of the English and Irish Conferences, and the time of holding the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London. The assistance which was now afforded him, was continued from year to year till the end of his public life ; and during this period, extending through nineteen years, he passed through such an amount of labour as was perhaps scarcely ever undertaken by any other man. He usually left home on the Monday morning, and preached once or twice a day, or preached once and attended a public meeting, returning home on the Saturday, to fulfil his engagements with his

own congregations on the Sabbath. This arrangement met the wishes of his Circuits generally; for if they were deprived of his week-day services, they had an efficient substitute; and both he and his assistant occupied the Circuit pulpits on the Lord's day. His friend, Mr. Turner, of Derby, used from year to year to make him a present of a small interleaved almanack; and on the blank pages of these diminutive volumes, he inscribed the daily engagements which he had made with friends in particular places. Seventeen of these almanacks now lie before the writer of these pages, literally filled with the names of places, and presenting scarcely a vacant day, except Saturday, when he returned to what he calls his "sweet home;" so that the crowded assemblies which his name drew together in distant places, from year to year, were collected, not during the leisure of the Sabbath, but on the other days of the week, when the calls of business are urgent and pressing: a demonstrative proof of the attractiveness of his ministry.

In those times, before railways were generally constructed in England, he was familiarly known to the drivers and guards of stage-coaches on all the great roads, who regarded him as a friend, and were ever ready to meet his wishes. On one occasion, it is said, he had made an engagement to meet a coach at the end of a cross-road, early in the morning; but when the coach arrived, he was not on the spot. The coachman stopped, and the passengers began to remonstrate. He expressed a full persuasion that the reverend gentleman would speedily appear, and he was unwilling to leave him. Immediately Mr. Newton was seen galloping up the cross-road with a carpet-bag in his hand. On his arrival he tied the horse's head to a gate, took his place behind the coachman with many expressions of thanks, and stated

that he had set off in time with a friend in a gig; that the gig had broken down, when he stripped the horse of its harness, mounted its bare back, and left his friend to follow on foot, for the purpose of taking the horse back again. By these means he was able to fulfil his engagements for the day.

A letter which he wrote a few months after the young Minister was appointed to take his week-night appointments, will serve at once to show what manner of spirit he was of, and his ceaseless activity. It was addressed to his friend Dr. Beecham, one of the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and is as follows:—

“MANCHESTER, *December 4th*, 1833.

“I AM obliged by your kind communication, as I was also by the ‘Notice’ which you sent me to Portsmouth. We had indeed delightful meetings in that town and district, especially at Cowes and Newport, where the chapels would have been filled had they been twice as large as they are. At Fareham we occupied the ball-room, which, notwithstanding the wind and rain, was crowded to excess. I have lately attended meetings at Warrington, Sheffield, Market-Weighton, Doncaster, Kirton-Lindsey, and Foxholes. In every instance the collection exceeded that of the former year. The Sheffield East Branch yielded more than the meeting of the District Society at the last Anniversary. At Foxholes the chapel would not contain a twelfth part of the crowd assembled on the occasion. Necessity is the parent of invention; and a prodigiously large booth was constructed, which would accommodate from twelve to fifteen hundred persons. This novel temple was full to overflowing at the meeting in the afternoon, and at the

preaching in the evening. The collection was five times the amount of that in the previous year.

“After I had pronounced the blessing in the evening, a young man, in the habit of a farmer’s servant, came to me in the crowd, and said, ‘I think I have not done quite enough; for if those poor creatures be as you say they are, I must try to do a little more;’ putting two shillings and sixpence into my hand. A farmer’s servant knows how he earns every half-crown that he obtains; but this man thought that he could do better without his half-crown than the Heathen can do without the Gospel of salvation.

“My list of engagements for the spring reads thus:—April 6th, 7th, and 8th, Sheffield; 13th, &c., Liverpool; 20th, &c., Birmingham; 27th, &c., Manchester; and you may say, May 4th, &c., London; but you must excuse me on the week-day. I am very willing to work on the Sabbath. April 11th, &c., I go to Bath and Bristol. I will try to arrange for Leicester and Nottingham. I have had pressing applications from Northampton, Salisbury, Stockton, Darlington, Barnard-Castle, and Alnwick, to none of which I have yet replied. Possibly I may attend some of those meetings in the north on my way to Scotland. At Castle-Donington, Huntingdon, and St. Ives, we had excellent meetings. At St. Ives the chapel-yard was nearly filled during the meeting.

“But kind as it was in the last Conference to appoint me a substitute, and truly excellent as is the young man so appointed, I find the Circuit is not satisfied. This morning I have been officially waited upon by the Circuit Stewards, stating to me, in the kindest and most respectful terms, the wish of the friends here, that I should be more at home; adding, that they have heard from different

quarters, that I am likely to be entirely devoted to the Missionary cause the next year, as travelling agent to the Society; and that, if there be any truth in the report, they ought to be informed before the Christmas Quarterly Meeting, that they may look out for themselves. I told them that the present plan could not be continued another year, for I am now more perplexed than ever; that what was formerly asked as a favour is now demanded as a right; and my letters of invitation have, for some time, averaged more than thirty a week. As to the report they had heard, I told them I could be no candidate for any such office; that it had been named to me by several of my brethren, and by some lay friends, in different parts of the country; but that I had never given an opinion on the subject. I promised them, however, to write to you by this post, expressing their desire that if anything like what they have heard were intended to be proposed to the Missionary Committee, the Circuit might be informed previously to the next Quarterly Meeting. One thing is clear: I must either give up this extra work, or I shall not get a Circuit."

Of the meeting at Foxholes which is mentioned in this letter, Mr. Addison, of Scarborough, who was present on the occasion, gives the following graphic account:—
“The golden harvest having been safely gathered in, several respectable farmers, residing at and near Foxholes, in the Scarborough Circuit, were desirous of having a Missionary Meeting; but where to hold it was the question. Their barns were filled with corn, and no chapel in the neighbourhood was sufficiently large. At length, they resolved to erect a temple in the open fields; and this they did by bringing together several waggons, which

they formed into a long square. Poles were placed at certain distances from each other, and over the whole was thrown a roof of tarpauling: and although no 'long-drawn aisle' or 'fretted roof' was there, it was indeed a beautiful temple, and was well filled with attentive people; and the holy enjoyment of that day left a permanent impression upon many minds. The next morning Mr. Newton said, 'Before I entered the tent, in the afternoon, I was astonished to see in every quarter large masses of people coming over the tops of the hills, all wending their way to this tabernacle in the wilderness.' He regretted that no artist was there to take a sketch of the animating scene."

Of Mr. Newton's character and course of action at this interesting period of his life, the Rev. John Bedford gives the following account:—"In 1833 I was appointed by the Conference to Manchester, as the Rev. Robert Newton's assistant, and resided in his house during the ensuing two years. Many considerations led me to regard this appointment with fear and trembling; but the uniform affability and kindness with which he treated me, both relieved my apprehensions, and encouraged me in my studies and labours. From first to last he acted towards me as a father; so that I could not but feel it to be a great privilege to labour under his direction, as a son in the Gospel.

"At the commencement of those years his popularity was very great. Every week, on his return home, a pile of letters, containing invitations to preach and to attend meetings in the most important Circuits of the Connexion, as well as in smaller places, awaited his consideration; while, in many instances, deputations, sometimes from a

considerable distance, solicited his services. Yet in my closest intimacy with him, I never heard him boast of his position, of his influence, or of the applause which everywhere attended his course. He carried his popularity with dignity, but without pride or ostentation; and invariably spoke, not of the high reputation which he possessed, but of the happiness of successful labour, and of the importance of the work before him. To do as much service as he could crowd into the shortest time was his uniform aim; and in this his extensive knowledge of the principal roads and coaches in the kingdom (for railways were not then numerous) was turned to the best account. He frequently calculated to a nicety the exact time it would require to reach particular places, and the help which could be obtained at various points, whether from private friends or public conveyances, to enable him to accomplish his journey in time for the services which he had engaged to conduct. To carry out plans of this kind often required very early rising, after the exertions of many preceding days, and the securing of a seat in or upon some coach, which probably was the only regular means of communication between distant places; and it was really surprising to learn how constantly he succeeded in carrying into effect his entire plans, often extending over two or three weeks of daily travelling, exposure to the changes of the weather, and extreme exertions, without disappointing a single expectation.

“That his heart was always in his work, many minute circumstances abundantly proved. For example: although he frequently did not reach home from his long journeys until Saturday afternoon, and had then a considerable correspondence to conduct, he generally attended the

prayer-meeting which was held in the vestry of the Oxford-road chapel on the Saturday evening, and evidently delighted to join in thanksgiving and supplication with the little band of pious persons who there assembled. Whenever he reached home in time to attend the weekly meeting of the Ministers of the Circuit, he was always present; and while his counsels were judicious, his prayers on such occasions were as fervent and frequently as copious as though he had been pleading with God in the midst of a great congregation in behalf of the ministry, the church, and the world.

“Although his time at home was so brief, if any special cases of affliction existed among those members of the Society who were known to him, he contrived, when it was at all practicable, to visit them. This diligent attention to matters which, in the midst of such extraordinary labours, might have been deemed, in his case, of minor moment, always impressed me with a profound respect for his character, as a good Minister of Jesus Christ, faithful in small as well as in great things relating to the house and service of Christ.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE interruptions which good men often experience in the enterprises of benevolence and piety upon which their hearts are set, and for which they are specially qualified, must ever be regarded as some of those mysteries of Divine Providence which human ingenuity strives in vain to unravel. Who can account for the fact, that St. Paul, who was called of God to evangelize the Heathen of his time, and who was endued with miraculous powers, as well as the requisite zeal and firmness of purpose, for the mighty task, was often confined in prisons by bad and worthless men, while he longed to go forth in his Master's name, and the people were actually perishing for lack of the knowledge which he was appointed to impart?

Mr. Wesley complained that he was frequently compelled to suspend his public labours, for the purpose of repelling the fierce attacks that were made upon his doctrine and proceedings by the Lavingtons and the Warburtons of his age,—men who would neither themselves attempt to instruct and reclaim the ignorant and profligate masses around them, nor quietly suffer him and his fellow-labourers to prosecute the pious and benevolent task.

It must have been intensely galling to the ardent mind of Mr. Newton, during the second and third years of his appointment to the Grosvenor-street Circuit in Manchester, to be diverted from his proper work of preaching the Gospel, and pleading the cause of evangelical Missions, and to be occupied in matters of discipline, which were forced upon him by misguided men, who engaged in

schemes of mischief, and attempted to introduce disorder and confusion into the Methodist Connexion, so as to turn many out of the way of righteousness.

After many years of incessant and violent agitation, the British Legislature passed what has been called the Catholic Relief Bill, admitting Romanists into Parliament, and giving them a voice in framing laws for this Protestant nation. This change in the Constitution was effected in the year 1829; and three years afterwards an equally important change took place in respect of the House of Commons, the elective franchise being materially altered, so as to embrace a much wider range. The consequence was, that the public mind was to a great extent unsettled, and many people were intent upon future changes, under the indefinite name of Reform, without knowing or even caring to what they would ultimately lead. By means of this state of public feeling, the peace of the Methodist Societies was seriously disturbed; and Mr. Newton was called upon to take a prominent part in resisting the tide of innovation which then set in, and which seemed for a time to threaten the very existence of the *Wesleyan* institutions, which had long been in operation, and from which the most substantial benefits had been received.

During Mr. Wesley's lifetime, he exercised a general superintendency over the Preachers and Societies that were in connexion with him; and at his decease his power in this respect devolved upon the Conference, which he appointed to assemble every twelve months. To meet any emergency that might arise in the intervals of its sittings, the Connexion was divided into Districts, the Preachers of which formed a Committee of the Conference, who were to

act in its behalf in every matter that might require their interference. Over every District there is a Chairman, who is annually appointed by ballot at the Conference, and is made responsible for the maintenance of discipline in his District, until the Conference shall again assemble.

Mr. Newton was the Chairman of the Manchester District in the years 1833 and 1834. The case which first claimed his attention was that of a young Preacher, who was stationed in a Circuit contiguous to Manchester, and who entered upon an irregular course of action, which was an occasion of just offence to many. He was the son of an esteemed Minister in the body, and was himself possessed of good talents and address; and had he confined himself to his proper work, to which he was solemnly pledged, he might have been extensively useful and highly honoured: but he unhappily imbibed the revolutionary spirit of the times, and engaged in a project in which it was impossible for him to succeed, and which was sure to destroy his usefulness as a Methodist Preacher. When the measure of Parliamentary Reform was carried, many persons thought that the next great change to be effected was the separation of the Church from the State; and in some quarters an opinion was expressed, that if the Methodists would only unite with other bodies of the community in an earnest attempt to effect this object, it might be speedily obtained. This young man appears to have entertained these views, and resolved to anticipate his fathers and brethren, by taking a leading part in this tempting project. He therefore connected himself with a Society which was formed for the express purpose of obtaining this end; became its Corresponding Secretary; attended public meetings which were convened to agitate

this question, avowing himself to be a Methodist Preacher, and thus compromising the character of the body to which he belonged; and all this without consulting his Superintendent, and in known opposition to his judgment.

It was impossible that these proceedings should pass without animadversion. In a body so large as that of the Wesleyan Methodists, it might be expected that there would be a diversity of opinion concerning the abstract question of a union between Church and State; but, as a religious community, they have never declared their hostility to the Church as a national establishment, nor have they ever affected to interfere with the revenues of the Clergy, or the prerogative of the Crown in the bestowal of ecclesiastical preferment. Many members of the Methodist Societies attend the services of the Church, and receive the Lord's supper at her altars. The two Wesleys lived and died in her communion; Sellon and Fletcher, the very able and earnest defenders of the Wesleyan theology, were of her Clergy; so was Dr. Coke, the father of the Wesleyan Missions; and so were Messrs. Richardson, Dickenson, and Creighton, who were officially connected with the Methodist chapels in London. The conduct of this young man was, therefore, an occasion of just offence, and was felt to be intolerable.

These were not the only grounds of objection to his proceedings. It was impossible that he should fulfil his engagements, as Corresponding Secretary to such a Society, sending letters all over the kingdom, attending public meetings, stirring up the people everywhere to exertion, associating with persons of every grade of opinion, and even with avowed unbelievers, and, at the same time, be an efficient Methodist Preacher, whose business it was, not

to preach so many times, or to take care of this or that Society, but to save as many souls as he could; to bring as many sinners as possible to repentance; and, with all his might, to build them up in that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. As a Methodist Preacher, he had solemnly bound himself to a diligent and prayerful study of the holy Scriptures, to the ministry of the word, to the visitation of the sick, and of the members of the Societies generally, to the religious care of children and young people, and to a respectful deference to the judgment of those who were over him in the Lord. These sacred pledges it was now impossible for him to keep.

In these circumstances it became the duty of Mr. Newton, as the Chairman of the District, to call the erring youth to an account. At the meeting which was convened on the occasion, the evil of his conduct was pointed out to the young man, and he was required to renounce his connexion with the Church-and-State-Separation Society, and the course of public agitation upon which he had entered; but this he peremptorily refused, and was therefore placed under suspension till the ensuing Conference. The same requirement upon him was made by that body, when it assembled and had heard the case; and this requirement was seconded by the entreaties of his aged father; but he was resolved to have his own way, preferring political agitation to the preaching of the Gospel, and therefore retired from the Connexion.

Through the whole of this vexatious business, Mr. Newton acted with equal kindness to the young man, and fidelity to the trust which he sustained. He was grieved to see the peace of the Societies disturbed, a

young man of good abilities and address ruining his usefulness as a Preacher, and violating his ministerial vows, for that which could never turn to any good account; and he was no less grieved that so much of his own time was occupied in listening to irritating debates, rather than in preaching the Gospel of Christ, and in engaging the prayers and efforts of Christian people in behalf of Heathen nations. But he felt that he had done his duty to the body with which he was happily united; his brethren declared their entire approval of what he had done; and it was undeniable that he had acted with tenderness and moderation. The offender, with all his faults, might have saved himself if he would.

At the Conference of 1834, which was held in London, Mr. Newton was returned to the same Circuit, and was again made the Chairman of the Manchester District; and he soon found that troubles of a more formidable kind awaited him, than were those which he had encountered in the past year. The agent of mischief in this case was not a young man, but a Minister of many years' standing, and the Superintendent of one of the Manchester Circuits; a man, too, who had hitherto maintained a peaceable character in the Connexion, but now surrendered himself to become the tool of a party, and had created surprise by a display of pugnacity at the Conference which was just ended.

For many years it had been felt that the Methodist Ministry laboured under a great disadvantage through the want of a previous training; and the best method of remedying this defect was a matter of anxious inquiry both with the Ministers and lay-members of the body. A Committee was appointed the previous year, to arrange a

plan for the purpose. They fulfilled their trust, and reported the result of their deliberations to the Conference ; and that body, after the entire subject had been amply discussed, resolved that the "Theological Institution" should be immediately commenced, and that the candidates for the Methodist Ministry at home, and also the men who were intended for Missionary service, should alike share in its benefits.

Dr. W., who had been a member of the Preparatory Committee, and was understood to be favourable to the project, when he found that he was not himself included in any of its arrangements, and that the man whom he nominated as the Theological Tutor was not accepted in that character, declared himself to be hostile to the entire scheme, and spoke against it in the Conference. It was, however, hoped that all opposition would now end, the matter having been determined by a large majority ; and the probability is that, had the Doctor been left to his own judgment and feeling, he would have peaceably acquiesced in the decision of his brethren. But there were other parties, actuated by the spirit of the times, and anxious to introduce organic changes in the Methodist system, who urged him on by flattery and promises of support, till his ruin as a Methodist Preacher was complete. The fact is, they cared nothing for him, any further than he was able to serve them in their schemes of mischief ; and when in this respect he was of no further use to them, they cast him aside as a broken reed.

On his return to his Circuit after the Conference, he set up the standard of rebellion against the body to which his submission was solemnly pledged, by publishing a pamphlet in opposition to the decision of his brethren in Conference

assembled, calling upon the people everywhere to resist it. He endeavoured to engage the authorities of his Circuit in the same course; he called upon the Missionary collectors to withhold their services, because the funds of the Missionary Society were to be in part applied to the giving of a literary and theological training to the men who were going forth to preach the Gospel to the Heathen, to translate the Holy Scriptures, and to give a Christian literature to savage tribes. He did more. He identified himself with a body of desperate men who banded themselves together to subvert the constitution of Wesleyan Methodism, and to substitute for it an untried system of democracy. For this purpose they called public meetings, endeavouring to inflame the passions of the populace; and they sent forth from the press misleading statements, and injurious attacks upon the character and motives of the most able and useful Ministers of the body.

Here then again Mr. Newton was compelled to interfere, as the Chairman of the Manchester District, and call upon his brethren to adjudicate in this case of fearful delinquency. They assembled, but the offender contemned their authority, and refused to answer for his conduct. He acknowledged the authority of the Conference in appointing him to a Circuit, and then attempted to subvert the power from which he had accepted the benefit. As he placed himself in an attitude of direct hostility to the rules and usages of the body, the District-Meeting, as in duty bound, suspended him from his ministerial functions; and requested Mr. Newton to take the charge of the Circuit till the Conference should assemble, or till the offender should submit to the rule and order which he had promised before God, not only to obey, but enforce. The Trustees of the chapels belonging

to the Circuit which was now placed under the care of Mr. Newton, were, with very few exceptions, faithful in the day of trial, especially the Trustees of the Oldham-street chapel, which was the head of the Circuit, and lent all their aid in upholding the discipline of the Connexion. Mr. James Wood, Mr. John Burton, and Mr. Fildes, especially, stood prominently forward, in this emergency, in defence of Methodism against lawless aggression.

The salary of Dr. W. was secured to him without diminution, notwithstanding his suspension, so that he sustained no pecuniary damage; but the party with which he had connected himself were reckless of all consequences, and made an appeal to the Court of Chancery, to restrain Mr. Newton from preaching in the Oldham-street Circuit, and to restore the suspended Doctor to his ministerial functions. By this means they endeavoured to annihilate at one stroke the discipline of the Connexion so far as the Ministry is concerned, and leave every Preacher at liberty to do whatever he pleases during the intervals of the Conference. Great was the anxiety which this appeal created among the friends of peace, of order, and of purity. That the proceedings in Dr. W.'s case were perfectly regular, and in accordance with the usages of the Connexion, was undeniable; but how secular Judges in a civil court would regard the regulations which the Conference had from time to time adopted, and which were drawn up by unprofessional men, was a matter of uncertainty. Many a prayer was therefore offered to God, that He would defend the right, and not suffer the hedge of discipline, by which a spiritual work had been hitherto guarded, to be broken down, and that work to be wantonly destroyed.

The case was heard in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, Feb-

ruary 28th, 1835, and two following days. Sir Charles Wetherell, Mr. Knight, Mr. Kindersley, and Mr. Parker, were the Counsel for the plaintiff; and for the defendants, Sir William Horne, Mr. Rolfe, and Mr. Piggott. The Court was crowded to excess, both the friends and the enemies of Methodism feeling the liveliest interest in the issue of the case. It was observed that the Counsel for the plaintiff appeared to be instructed to treat the character of some of the most esteemed and venerated Ministers in the Wesleyan body with sarcasm and invective, and to hold them up to the Court as objects of distrust, and even of reprobation. The Rev. Joseph Taylor, the President of the Conference, Mr. Newton, the Chairman of the Manchester District, and Mr. Bunting, who was known to be one of the ablest advocates of the Wesleyan discipline, and a wise adviser in all cases of difficulty, all received their share of censure, and were severally compared with some of the worst characters that figure in English history, Judge Jefferies in particular. In this species of forensic rhetoric Sir Charles Wetherell surpassed his brethren. This able lawyer, who was eccentric in his habits, slovenly in his dress, and a high Tory in politics, was retained to defend a low and vulgar democracy in a Christian community, and to show that a thorough contempt of all rule and order is perfectly justifiable in a man who has solemnly engaged himself to uphold both; and it may be readily conceived that he found it much easier to utter coarse invectives than to defend what he could not but feel to be "radically" wrong. He was especially copious in his reflections upon Mr. Newton, affecting not to know that he was in the Court. Mr. Newton sat before Sir Charles, looked him full in the face, lifted up his noble head, and presented a

face as honest and as truly English as ever appeared in that or any other assembly. Not a muscle of his face moved; not a blush arose upon it; and his brow was as calm and smooth as if he had been in a happy Missionary Meeting; for he had a conscience void of offence both toward God and man. He was not "buffeted for his faults," but censured for doing that which was matter of sacred duty.

Having heard the entire case with patient attention, Sir Lancelot Shadwell, the Vice-Chancellor, delivered judgment with admirable precision, refusing the injunction for which Dr. W. and his party had applied, and justifying all that the District-Meeting and the faithful Trustees had done in the case, as being in strict accordance with the rules and usages of the Connexion, to which the Doctor and his friends were as solemnly pledged as the defendants. At the same time he animadverted upon the intemperate and abusive language which Dr. W. had used in his pamphlet, in respect of his brethren in the Ministry, who had felt it their duty to oppose him in his divisive and revolutionary proceedings; reminding him that "reviling" is a sin which is expressly forbidden to Christian people.

In the morning of this eventful day Mr. Newton came to the Court from some place in the country, where he had preached the preceding evening; and when the judgment of the Vice-Chancellor had been given, and the Court was breaking up, his friends gathered round him as he retired with his great-coat on his arm, presenting to him their congratulations, and some of them inviting him to their homes. His answer was, "I thank you! I thank you! but I must be upon the coach in a little while,

having engaged to preach in a distant town to-morrow morning.”

“So spake the seraph Abdiel,.....
unmoved,
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;
 Nor number nor example with him wrought
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind.”

Yet while he found solace in his evangelical mission, and was sustained by the consciousness of personal rectitude, he felt, and that deeply, the injury that was done to the cause which, above all others, was dear to his heart,—the cause of spiritual religion, the religion of holy love. A wicked newspaper, in the interest of the hostile party, poured forth its reckless abuse from week to week upon the Wesleyan Ministers generally, and especially upon the most gifted and faithful among them ; noisy and clamorous meetings were extensively convened, for the same evil purpose ; and the consequence was, that many religious people, particularly among the poor, were stunned, offended, and turned out of the way of righteousness, in not a few instances casting off even the profession of Christian godliness. These cases of religious defection, in which the people made shipwreck of their faith, deeply affected the generous heart of Mr. Newton ; so that, at times, his wonted cheerfulness forsook him ; he remained silent in his family for hours together ; or only exclaiming, in tones of sorrow, “These sheep,—what have they done, that they should be thus scattered and destroyed ?” The unmerited reproach with which his own name was loaded, he could bear without a sigh ; but the scattering of the poor people, who had been gathered into the fold by

hard and prayerful ministerial labour, wrung his heart with anguish. Justly is it said, "One sinner destroyeth much good." It requires but a feeble agency to effect a fearful amount of evil, either in religious bodies, or in general society.

Dr. W. and his friends, still bent upon the overthrow of the Methodist discipline, sought to retrieve what they had lost in the Court below, by an appeal to the High Court of Chancery, where Lord Lyndhurst then presided with unrivalled ability. Before him the case was argued, by the same Counsel, on the 18th of March, and the three following days; and on the 25th his Lordship pronounced judgment. Here again Sir Charles Wetherell distinguished himself. He was less abusive than he had formerly been; for perhaps he remembered the animadversions of the Vice-Chancellor upon his client, for his intemperate language: but he argued like a man who was not convinced by his own reasonings; so that it required not the perspicacity of a Lyndhurst to detect his fallacies. The writer of this narrative well remembers that Sir Charles, in his attempt to prove that, according to the constitution of Methodism, no District-Meeting has the power to suspend a Preacher, whatever may be his conduct, alleged that no District-Meeting was ever known to suspend a Preacher during the whole of Mr. Wesley's lifetime. "I believe, Sir Charles," said the Lord Chancellor, "that the Connexion was not divided into Districts till after Mr. Wesley's death. So that when there were no Districts, of course there could be no District-Meetings, either to suspend a Preacher, or to do anything else." "Exactly so, my Lord," replied Sir Charles, with perfect *naïveté*; "that is my argument." Yet nobody thought that

the learned Knight deemed it of any value ; for if it proved anything, it proved that because Sir Charles could not wear a silk gown before he was born, he could not by possibility wear one afterwards.

During the interval which elapsed between the arguing of the case, and the delivery of the Chancellor's judgment, there is reason to believe that many a prayer was offered by devout people in the retirement of the closet, that his Lordship might be guided aright. An adverse judgment would have been the most serious calamity that ever befell the Wesleyan body. It would have been an inlet to the greatest practical evils ; giving the Ministers in their Circuits a license to perpetrate any outrage, during the intervals of the Conference, retaining at the same time the undisturbed occupation of the pulpits, and leaving their colleagues and the people without any means of redress.

On the morning which was appointed for the delivery of judgment, the Court was crowded to excess. His Lordship spoke nearly an hour, apparently without any reference to notes or memoranda, and with surprising accuracy, so as to make only one mistake, and that in a date. He said, "I have looked with considerable attention into the volumes which have been handed up to me, containing the Minutes of the proceedings of the Society. They breathe a spirit of meekness and of Christian feeling throughout ; and I trust I may be permitted to express my regret that, in a Society so constituted, for such objects, with such motives, and with such feelings, dissensions of this description should have been introduced."

"The question resolves itself into two points. Has the District-Committee power to suspend a Preacher ? and, if the District-Committee have the power to suspend, the

next question will be, Have they regularly exercised that power in the present instance?"

Having argued both these questions, he added, "I therefore am of opinion, not only that the District-Committee had the power to suspend, but I am of opinion that they acted legally." "Upon these two grounds, the regularity of the proceedings, and being satisfied of the authority of the body, I am bound to affirm the decision in this respect of the Vice-Chancellor." "The judgment therefore of His Honour the Vice-Chancellor must be affirmed."

When this decision had been given, Mr. Newton and Dr. W. left the Court, intent upon very different objects. The Doctor, as regardless of the judgment of the Lord Chancellor, as he was of the decision of the Manchester District-Meeting, resumed his course of agitation, labouring with all his might to spread discord in the Societies throughout the kingdom, and alienate them in confidence and affection from the Ministers who were over them in the Lord, apprehensive, as it would seem, that his services in this evil work would be of short duration.

Mr. Newton resumed his ministry, and his advocacy of Missions, with renewed zest, and to the utmost of his power. He took a leading part in the meetings of the Auxiliary Societies of Liverpool and Manchester, and then attended the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London in the beginning of May. The Annual Meeting of this year excited special attention, because of the strenuous attempts which had been made for several months to damage the Society in the public estimation, to ruin its finances, and thus to cripple its operations, and extinguish the light of truth in heathen lands. The consequence was, that the public meeting in Exeter-Hall was

larger than it had ever been. The place was densely filled, and some hundreds went away unable to obtain admission.

The people remembered the unmerited abuse which had been lavished upon Mr. Newton for several months, and the exemplary meekness and self-possession with which he had passed through the fiery trial; and when he arose to speak, a considerable time elapsed before he could gain a hearing. From all parts of the hall proceeded several successive bursts of kind feeling, the sounds of which filled him with thankfulness, and humbled him into the dust. He felt that what are usually called "rounds of applause" were in this case declarations of attachment to the Missions, the maintenance of which was dear to him as his own soul.

When silence was restored, he said: "It is not necessary that I should say that the Missionary cause, which has brought us together once more, has still my most entire approbation. I will say, however, that this cause was never more dear to me than it is this day. We have heard of storms and battle-fields; but surely no one who had not heard anything of this kind before he came to this meeting, could suspect that there was any truth in the statement. We have no storms here, thank God; we are all of one heart and mind; we have no contest, unless it be who shall be foremost in the career of Christian benevolence.

"In the course of the year, (to take up the figure of my excellent friend Dixon from Liverpool,) there certainly has been a storm somewhere about the Black Rock, near that town; yet, thank God, the Missionary vessel has weathered the storm, and has come round the Rock in safety. I was on board that vessel the other day. I found her in good condition, and, so far as I am com-

petent to judge, she is perfectly seaworthy. There were attempts, I know, made by some on board to scuttle her, that she might go down; but they found her constructed of materials far more impenetrable than even the heart of oak, cased with copper. I have also to say, that the vessel is well-manned; and, what my friend neglected to say, that during her last annual voyage, notwithstanding all that has taken place, she has yielded a larger cargo than she ever did before.

“If they have had a sea-fight at Liverpool, we have had some land-skirmishing at Manchester: but we have not struck; our colours are yet flying; and you will give us credit when we say, that we are determined to stand by them. I hope we have not been cowards during the late engagement; certainly we have not been deserters, and we are not come here to say that we have had a hard and perilous service, and must now retire. We are not even come to exhibit our scars, but are ready again for active service. I am free to confess that, during the whole of our engagement at Manchester, I never feared the result. I was sure our cause was good; it was the cause of truth and righteousness; and I was confident the God of truth and righteousness would maintain it. I am happy to say, that even Manchester has been more productive this year than in any former one; and we shall go back to our respective posts of duty refreshed and encouraged, and resolved to do all that we can to advance this good work.

“Recent circumstances have led us to make a more careful examination of our principles; and we are sure that we stand upon solid rock. As to opposition, it is often the occasion of increased success. When all is

smooth and quiet, even the real friends of the cause are in danger of slumbering; but when opposition raises its voice, every dormant energy is aroused, and every man is at his post, and the friends of the cause are more united than ever. We never should have known in Manchester, how well we loved one another, had not this opposition taught us. Our friends there (for in this respect they have done us a friendly service) have awakened attention, pulled the alarm-bell, and people have inquired what was the matter; and not only has inquiry been elicited, but information has been obtained, and conviction produced; and not a few, in Manchester and its neighbourhood, from that cause now say, 'We will go with you; for God is with you of a truth.'

"Storms are occasionally necessary, and they will arise. They purify the atmosphere; and they certainly have produced this effect both in Manchester and Liverpool. There are trees which only strike their roots deeper when storms assail them. The Missionary tree will strike its roots deeper, and spread its branches wider, and become more verdant, fruitful, and blooming, than it ever yet has been.

"I will not trouble you longer than by repeating a passage from the New Testament, to which I have referred in my own mind during the last six months with an interest which I never felt before. Some of us little know what honours await us; for we have been called to sympathize with even the Apostles of our Lord: 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'"

With respect to the two cases of discipline in which Mr. Newton was concerned, the persecutions to which he was subjected on their account, and the spirit in which he passed through the fiery ordeal, Mr. Bedford, who lived in his family, bears an important testimony. The abettors of Dr. W. endeavoured, by inflammatory placards and other similar means, to enlist the sympathies and aid of "lewd fellows of the baser sort;" and, in a town like Manchester, it is never difficult to create a riot against any man who is engaged in the support of law and order, by calling him a tyrant and oppressor; and by representing men who are suffering for their evil deeds as martyrs, advocates of liberty, and friends of the people. Ungodly men, who had never learned the first principles of morality and religion, and who had no more connexion with Methodism than they had with the philosophy of Plato, were asked to assist in reforming the ecclesiastical arrangements of John Wesley. They knew nothing of the points at issue between the parties, but they could utter frightful noises, call names, and throw stones.

"It is painful to think," says Mr. Bedford, "that a man who was so pure-minded, laborious, and useful, should have been exposed to calumny and persecution in the discharge of his official duties. Yet so it was; and his biography cannot be written, nor his character fully sketched, without adverting to scenes of trial through which he had thus to pass. Having, during the earlier part of my residence in his house, observed how well he could bear popularity, and how sacredly he consecrated the whole to his great Master's service, I had subsequently many opportunities of marking his spirit and deportment while exposed to opposition and reproach for the truth's sake.

“As the Chairman of the Manchester District, he felt it to be his duty, in two cases, which at that time became painfully notorious, to vindicate the principles of the Methodist Connexion, the acts of the Conference, and the reputation of several of its leading members. I have reason to know that the proceedings relating to these cases were not taken up without much reflection and prayer, nor without a full conviction of their necessity and importance. But he could hardly have anticipated, where duty was so clear, the severity of the storm which broke upon him for the performance of it, especially in the latter of the two cases. Yet he bore it with a calm meekness and a steady patience, which showed a well-balanced mind, and a heart unruffled by anger or resentment, and which exhibited, in a new aspect of dignity and conscious rectitude, a character that had long been resplendent amidst applause and honour.

“It surely required great firmness, as well as a full conviction of duty, to bear a transition, sudden in itself, and peculiar in its causes, from a long career of extraordinary popularity, during which delighted multitudes hung upon his lips, to a state of things in which his right to occupy certain pulpits was disputed, and he had to assert that right amidst undisguised manifestations of dislike and opposition. Well do I remember the time when a sort of popular violence was attempted in order to intimidate him, and he was threatened with personal injury; yet he did not shrink from the post assigned him, nor did he retire from the pulpit until the disturbers, by various means of annoyance, rendered it impossible for him to continue the service. He then returned home, after being hooted by a promiscuous crowd in the streets, sorrowful, indeed, that mis-

guided men could so far forget what was due to public decency, as well as to the cause and messengers of Christ; but calmly casting himself on the protection of God, placing the issue of events in His hands, and praying that to those who had so grossly opposed and insulted him, repentance and forgiveness might be granted. Many were the anonymous letters that he received, some of them loading him with every species of abuse, and others threatening him with personal violence.

“The misrepresentations of his official acts by certain portions of the public press were frequent and gross; and for a time, as I accompanied him along the streets, I heard rude men hiss at him, and utter scurrilous language: yet his remarks on such occasions were few, and indicative of pity and sorrow, rather than of irritation; nor did he take any steps to punish the aggressors, or to defend his injured character.

“I do not remember that I ever saw his usual serenity remarkably disturbed but once. An individual called upon him, who, as a convert from Popery, had been for a time employed in a part of the Mission-field. While partaking of the hospitality of Mr. Newton, he indulged in a series of remarks derogatory to the character and principles of Ministers with whom he had occasional intercourse. With evident emotion, but with great dignity and firmness, Mr. Newton told him that he was unaccustomed to listen to such disparaging reflections upon the absent, and especially upon men whom he knew to be entitled to all confidence and respect; and that he must either abstain from such observations, or retire. The backbiter was silenced, and soon after took his leave.

“In reviewing the trying scenes through which he

passed, during that season of public agitation, I know not which to admire most,—his fidelity to great principles, his willing sacrifice of personal popularity, his patience and gentleness under grievous provocations, or his calm and unwavering trust in God, as the Judge of his motives and conduct, and the ultimate Vindicator of his integrity and reputation. I rejoice that he outlived the slanders which assailed him, and received the homage which is so justly due to consistent piety, self-denying labours, unswerving fidelity, and a long course of eminent usefulness.”

A few weeks after the delightful Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society had been held in London, in the year 1835, Mr. Newton prepared to attend the Irish Conference in Belfast, according to an arrangement which was made twelve months before, visiting Scotland on his way. He was kindly entertained, as he had often been before, at the house of Mrs. and Miss Drummond, in Edinburgh, where he attended a Missionary Meeting, and then hastened to Aberdeen, being pledged to preach there, and to assist at a similar service. Here he felt himself to be so seriously unwell, that he returned to Edinburgh with all speed; and on entering into the house of Mrs. Drummond, the first words he was heard to utter were, “O, I am ill!” His complaint was inflammation of the chest. Mrs. Drummond immediately sent for Dr. Coldstream, an eminent physician in the city. When he arrived, the disease had assumed so serious a form, that there appeared little hope that the patient could survive many hours. Violent remedies were applied; information of his perilous state was conveyed to Mrs. Newton; and Dr. Coldstream, aware of the value of his patient’s life, and fearing the issue, called to his assistance his friend and relation Dr. John

Campbell, another eminent medical practitioner in Edinburgh. Intelligence of his danger spread with great rapidity through the kingdom; the deepest sympathy was everywhere awakened; and, as in the case of St. Peter, "prayer was made of the church without ceasing" for the preservation of a life which was felt to be eminently valuable. At length the disorder abated; yet such was its power, that the physician confessed his inability to account for the recovery of the sufferer, except on the principle of a direct interposition of Divine Providence in answer to prayer.

Miss Drummond, now Mrs. Cooper of Dunstable, who with her mother attended upon Mr. Newton with the tenderest assiduity, says: "It was beautiful to witness, throughout his illness, the calm and serene state of mind which he was enabled to exhibit. At all times his faith was strong, resting upon his Saviour. I was in constant attendance upon him, delighting to minister to his wants; and when I asked him, as I frequently did, whether he felt anxious or disturbed, his usual answer was, 'No, no, my dear young friend: I know all is well. I have faith in God.' One day, when I placed on the table in his room a beautiful flower, newly plucked, he looked at it, and feebly said, (for he was not able to speak much,) 'That flower will fade, and so must I.'"

On the 13th of July he was so far recovered, as to be able to write to his children in Manchester. He says: "This is the first day in which I have been permitted to use my pen since my severe attack of sickness; and with what delight do I employ it to tell those who are so dear to me, that by the merciful providence of God my life, which was in great peril, is spared! I was in such a state when

I arrived here, that without most prompt assistance I could not have survived many hours. The doctors took about seventy ounces of blood from me before the inflammation could be subdued. But God gave His blessing to the means which were used, and I am given back to my family and to the church of Christ. I know my dear girls have prayed for me, and I think dear Frank has done the same. Many have made intercession in my behalf; and prayer has been heard. May this visitation be sanctified to us all!

“The Lord has been very gracious to me in my extremity. I have had those heavenly consolations which have greatly sweetened the otherwise bitter cup. You will join with me in giving thanks to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in this behalf. How thankful I have been that your mother came! She has nursed me as no other person could have done. God bless my dear children, is the earnest prayer of their affectionate father.”

To this letter Mrs. Newton adds, by way of postscript: “Your father is still going on well, and has been a few hours out of his room, in the adjoining drawing-room, this morning. If we go on as we do, I hope that at the beginning of the next week we may sail for England.”

In about three weeks from the time of his seizure, he returned by sea to Liverpool, and thence to Manchester, where his children and friends received him with thankfulness and joy, and almost as one that had been raised from the dead. He soon recovered his strength, so as to be able to attend the English Conference, which this year was held in Sheffield, and was an object of intense interest, because of the transactions of the preceding year. The Preparatory Committees were very numerous attended, both by Ministers and laymen, who had come from all

parts of the kingdom to testify their attachment to the system of Wesleyan Methodism, and to pledge themselves afresh to its support; and many were the hearty congratulations which Mr. Newton received on account of his recent recovery from dangerous illness, and the Christian fidelity with which he had been enabled to maintain his trust in the midst of public clamour and of fierce opposition.

In one of the Committee Meetings, at which many laymen were present, there was a general call upon Dr. Bunting to express his sentiments concerning the disputes which had been recently originated by Dr. W. and his party. He obeyed the call, and spoke with admirable clearness and force at considerable length. On the subject of church-government, he observed, there had long been a diversity of judgment among Christians of equal intelligence and piety; some of whom preferred Episcopacy; others, Presbyterianism; and others again, Independency. He remarked that, although Christians might innocently espouse various forms of church-government, there are certain great principles which all churches are bound by the New Testament to maintain, and which they cannot violate without sin.

There is, for instance, the law of purity, the law of peace, the law of courtesy, the law of fidelity.

Every Christian community is bound to preserve purity of doctrine and of manners; to resist all attempts to innovate upon the vital truths of the Gospel, and to exercise a salutary discipline upon all that walk disorderly, whether they be Ministers or private individuals.

No duty is inculcated in the Apostolical Epistles with greater frequency and earnestness, than that of cultivating and preserving peace in all the churches of the saints.

Peace is the bond by which the unity of the Spirit is perpetuated; and it is our Lord's legacy to all His disciples. While Christians are directed, if it be possible, as much as lieth in them to live peaceably with all men, they are especially charged to be at peace among themselves.

In all their intercourse with each other, they are peremptorily required to treat one another with due esteem and respect; to be courteous; to be subject one to another; inasmuch as charity, which is the sum and substance of their religion, is neither "puffed up," nor "behaveth itself unseemly."

In their collective, no less than in their individual, capacity, they are required to show all good fidelity. This is one of the things which are of good report, and by the neglect of which the Gospel is often blamed, to the injury of them that are without.

No man is bound, in the first instance, to embrace the Wesleyan form of Christianity; but when he has embraced it, it is his duty to conform to its order, and transmit it unimpaired to others; or, if he cannot do this, quietly to withdraw from his connexion with it. It is unjust to Mr. Wesley's memory, and a breach of public faith, for any man to assume the profession of Wesleyan Methodism for the purpose of subverting its vital principles and of changing its form. It is also an act of flagrant injustice to other parties, for a number of men belonging to the Methodist body to promote incessant agitation for revolutionary purposes, to the grief and annoyance of their brethren, who conscientiously deprecate the meditated changes, and have connected themselves with the system under the distinct impression that it should

be preserved to them and their posterity entire and unaltered.

To change the constitution of the Conference, by the admission of lay delegates, for instance, as contended for by some agitators, would be a violation of Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration, and a breach of that trust which he committed to his sons and successors in the Gospel.

Every man is at liberty to form his own theory of church-order, and to frame both Conferences and other institutions upon whatever model he pleases; but no man has a right to tamper with the plans and arrangements which Mr. Wesley introduced into the Connexion established by him, and which have been adopted by hundreds of thousands of people, with a reference to their own personal salvation and usefulness.

If a man is dissatisfied with the accommodations which the Methodist house affords him, let him quietly retire, and provide for himself a residence more suited to his taste; but let him not remain to keep up a perpetual disturbance in the family, by attempting to force upon them pretended improvements, which they believe would be ruinous both to themselves and their children.

Mr. Newton's brethren in the Ministry, assembled in Conference, gave him ample proof of their unabated confidence, by again electing him as their Secretary; and their unanimity in this and in all their official acts was most gratifying, considering the circumstances of the Connexion, and the strenuous attempts which had been made through the year to produce among them alienation and discord.

At this Conference Dr. W. appeared, to prosecute an

appeal against the act of the District-Meeting, in placing him under suspension. The right of appeal he had clearly forfeited by his subsequent conduct; yet he was allowed to defend himself as well as he was able. But as the course which he had pursued was absolutely incapable of any just defence, being alike a violation of those conventional rules which, as a Methodist Preacher, he had solemnly engaged to observe, and of the Christian law of charity, peace, and truth; and as he neither expressed regret for the past, nor offered any promise of amendment for the future; he was righteously severed from the body of which he had shown himself to be unworthy.

In the meanwhile Mr. Newton's brethren, with great cordiality, passed the following resolution, which they also recorded in their published Minutes:—"The Conference take this opportunity of declaring their entire confidence in the character of their beloved brother, the Rev. Robert Newton; their unchanged and cordial affection; their deep sympathy with him on account of the insults and opposition he has met with in the discharge of his duties to the Connexion; and their approval of his firm but courteous and Christian spirit and conduct on the occasion of the late suits; for which their most hearty and unanimous thanks are hereby respectfully tendered to him."

Amidst his duties as the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Newton found time to address the following letter to Mrs. and Miss Drummond, of Edinburgh, to whose kindness in his late affliction he felt himself deeply indebted:—"In England we have an adage, 'Out of sight, out of mind.' In some cases this may be true; but I am quite sure it is not universally correct. I may

safely affirm that no day has elapsed since I saw you, in which you have not been in my mind. And if 'gratitude be the memory of the heart,' then how can I possibly forget you? Never, O never, 'while memory holds her seat.' Your more than polite attention and kindness to me in the time of severe affliction have made an impression of respect and gratitude, which even the rough hand of death shall not be able to efface from my heart. And in these feelings my dear wife will not yield to her husband.

"My health, I thank God, has continued to improve to this day; and though I have sacredly kept my engagements with my medical attendants, I hope very soon to resume my work. My cough is entirely gone, and I eat and sleep as well as ever. My earnest prayer is, that my spiritual health may equally improve, and that I may become a holier man, and a more useful Minister of Jesus Christ.

"We have had a most delightful Conference. Never did I witness such unanimity among the Preachers on all great questions. And the religious services have been signally marked by the presence and blessing of God. Again and again have we exclaimed, in the language of the venerable Wesley, 'The best of all is, God is with us.'

"It is now finally settled that we go to Leeds, where we earnestly hope we shall have the pleasure to see Miss Drummond. Tell my good friend, Dr. Coldstream, he will receive some tracts from London soon. Mrs. Newton has been taking care of me every day since I left your quiet and hospitable habitation. She is not in the Conference, or she would send much love and thanks. May

the blessing of the Triune Jehovah be your portion for ever and ever."

There can be no doubt that the kindness of these two ladies, mother and daughter, was a means, in the hand of God, of preserving the life of this distinguished servant of Christ; and if this record of his labours shall go down to posterity, their kind attentions to him shall be had in remembrance. But for their promptitude in engaging the best medical aid, and their subsequent tenderness and assiduity in waiting upon him, the probability is, that his life and labours would have ended at that time.

CHAPTER IX.

AT the Conference of 1835, Mr. Newton was appointed to the Leeds East Circuit; but before he proceeded to that station he paid a visit to Boulogne, for the purpose of preaching to the Methodist congregation in that town, fulfilling engagements at various places on his way. When he arrived in London, he wrote to Mrs. Newton, giving an encouraging account both of himself and his labours. His letter bears the date of September 19th, and is as follows:—

“How can I be sufficiently thankful to the God of my mercies, that, after the toils of the past week, I am in perfect health! Indeed each successive day has contributed to my improvement in this respect; and, what is far better, I trust I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. Many have listened with deep attention to the message of mercy; and I have reason to hope that it was embraced by them. How desirable it is to preach as a dying man to dying men!

“The friends of truth and religion of various denominations have come many miles to see me, as one raised from the dead. I find that when the news of my affliction reached different places, the friends called public prayer-meetings in my behalf. What am I, that I should be regarded after this manner? May my spared life and renewed health be devoted unreservedly to Him whose I am, and whom I serve!

“I am happy to find a tranquillized spirit among our

Societies; and I think the same is observable in the country generally: the political fever is subsiding.”

On his arrival in Leeds he wrote to Mrs. Newton again, under the date of September 26th, she being still in Manchester:—“Through the abundant goodness of God, I am here safe and sound. Indeed, I never was better in health, though I have preached twice nearly every day, and have travelled daily from forty to a hundred miles. Last Wednesday evening I preached in Boulogne, and arrived in Leeds last night before seven o’clock. The coach from London was full in the inside, and I came on the outside all the way. The night was very cold, but it seemed to do me good. I was prepared for my breakfast at Leicester, at half-past five o’clock in the morning.

“I had intended to take you by surprise the last evening; but when I reflected how short my stay must have been, and that the additional expense would be about two pounds, I determined on coming to my solitary home.

“I must tell you all about France when I see you. I found, however, that I could make myself understood at the hotels. I had a most elegant congregation at Boulogne. Of course everybody was extremely polite.

“I found here twenty-six letters to answer. I preach at the Old Chapel at seven o’clock in the morning, and then twice in the country.”

At this time the town of Leeds was the head of two distinct and separate Circuits, to each of which Mr. Newton was appointed three years; so that his family remained six years in this place. During this period he spent his Sundays in Leeds and its immediate neighbourhood; on the week-days he served the Connexion generally,

from the Land's End to the Tweed; and seldom was he absent from the Irish Conference, where he was always welcome, and his counsel and ministry were highly appreciated and eminently useful.

In one of his voyages to the sister-island he met with a lady who, having learned that he was a Methodist Preacher, requested him to give her his opinion concerning Mr. Robert Newton, of whose powers as a public speaker, and extraordinary labours, she had heard very surprising accounts, which she found it difficult to believe. He told her that he did happen to know something of the man after whom she inquired, and thought that the parties who had given her an account of him had greatly over-rated his talents and services. On her arrival in Dublin, however, she learned that this celebrated man was appointed to preach there, and determined to go and judge for herself. On taking her seat in the chapel, she was not a little mortified to find that she had been actually requesting Robert Newton's opinion of his own abilities and character. Whether she thought with him that these had been over-rated, we know not; but she became an ardent admirer of his ministry.

From the Dublin Conference of 1836 he thus writes to Mrs. Newton: "July 5th.—We had two overflowing congregations on Sunday. There were hundreds of people who could not gain admission into the chapel. The collection was upwards of one hundred pounds. Yesterday we had a splendid meeting at the Rotunda; the Lord Mayor in the chair, in his court-dress. Report says that it was the best meeting of the kind that was ever held in Ireland. I am, I thank God, in perfect health, and am indeed comfortable at Mr. Owen's.

“The Irish are as hospitable as ever. The cards of invitation are really annoying. I take four meals every day, and might have four times that number. I hope to spend the greater part of next week with you; but this is between ourselves, or work will be contrived for me. I think I ought to have a little breathing-time before our own Conference commences. The Lord bless you all!”

To place upon record in detail the labours of Mr. Newton during the six years of his appointment to Leeds, is impossible. He put forth all his energies both of mind and body in the service of his Lord, labouring day and night to bring sinners to their Saviour, to edify believers in faith and love, and to create everywhere a kind and generous feeling in behalf of the heathen world; and both in his own Circuit, and through the Connexion generally, he met with the respect and esteem to which his zeal and self-denial entitled him. There were particular places which he was accustomed to visit yearly, as Derby, Howden, Armin, Whitby, &c.; he preached from year to year the Anniversary sermons in the Lower Abbey-street chapel, Dublin, when he visited the Irish Conference, and lived to witness the extinction of the debt upon that place of worship. He attended, as a matter of course, the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, the arrangements of which every one would have felt to be defective if they had not included his presence. To him the English Conference was no season of relaxation; for the laborious office of Secretary was usually assigned to him, so that a strict attention to its multifarious and important business was required of him. His brethren in the Ministry held him in high admiration; but the more they esteemed and loved him, the greater was the amount of labour that they

exacted at his hands. No man of indolent habits, either mental or physical, would have submitted to pay the price of Mr. Newton's popularity: but he was borne along by a strong tide of joyous and benevolent feeling; he was uninterruptedly happy in his Saviour; so that his daily song was,—

“ With Thee conversing, I forget
All time, and toil, and care;
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art here.”

In the Leeds East Circuit he had as his colleagues the Rev. Robert Young, William Barton, and William Smith, who speak of him in terms of unqualified esteem and affection. “I found him,” says Mr. Young, “a thorough gentleman, and an eminent Christian. His ministry was greatly valued for its richness in evangelic truth, and was, as in other places, exceedingly attractive and edifying.”

“Two things in him,” says Mr. Barton, “I may be permitted to observe, both of which were indicative of the goodness of his heart. I often felt, when I was his colleague, how far he was from assuming to be above the Ministers that were associated with him. Of course, we were reminded of his superior abilities, and of his great popularity, but never by himself. Towards us his spirit was always that of a brother. I have invariably felt the same upon the Missionary platform. He generally spoke when the meeting was considerably advanced, and often alluded to the addresses which had been delivered, but never in terms of disparagement, or in a tone of sarcasm, so as to give unnecessary pain. His references to preceding speakers, though frequently playful, were always kind and even encouraging.”

“Mr. Newton was unquestionably a strict disciplinarian,”

says Mr. Smith : “ but he exacted no conformity to rule of which he did not himself set an example. In his dealings with his brethren, as the Chairman of the District, and in all his intercourse with them, love and kindness were prominent ; so that while we revered his virtues and authority, we admired the man, and delighted in his society. His powers of conversation, in social parties, were admirable. He could draw the minds of his friends around him to spiritual topics with such simplicity and ease, that I longed to be like him. He stood as upon an eminence, and in his company I was often reminded of Cowper’s beautiful lines :—

‘ When one who holds communion with the skies
 Has fill’d his urn where those pure waters rise,
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,
 ’T is even as if an angel shook his wings.
 Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
 That tells us *whence* his treasures are supplied.’ ”

A few extracts from letters which he wrote during this period of his life will further show the temper of his mind, and the manner in which he was employed. Thus he writes to Mrs. Newton from the Birmingham Conference, in 1836, at which his friend Dr. Bunting presided, and he sustained the office of Secretary : “ We have an increase in our Societies of more than ten thousand souls, blessed be God ! Never was any former Conference more distinguished by the presence of the great Master. Several sons of Preachers are among those who were admitted into full connexion. One of them told the Conference how he had been prayed for by his mother ; how he had almost broken her heart ; and at last came, and threw himself at her feet, to ask forgiveness. Another said that he resisted con-

viction, till at last his father was suddenly seized with sickness, of which he died ; and when he came into the room where the body of his father lay, and looked at those cold and closed lips which had so often been opened in prayer for him, and in giving him instruction, he resolved to yield himself to God, and had by the help of grace kept his resolution.

“Dr. and Mrs. Fisk, who are here, are very pleasant people. He wishes me to visit America. He is the President of the Wesleyan University at Middletown. Give my love to the dear children. God bless you all !”

Again, when she was on a visit to Liverpool, he writes to her under the date of September 20th, 1836 : “I preached in five counties last week, and eleven sermons ; and yet I returned as well as I ever was in my life. Thank God !

“Yesterday the Conference Deputation met the Memorialists at Bramley. I was the Chairman of the meeting ; and am happy to say that they agreed, after explanations were given respecting the laws and usages of Wesleyanism, to drop all further agitation, and be hearty Methodists. We had a charming Missionary Meeting in the evening.

“To-morrow, the 21st, I preach at Easby ; on the 22d, at Bishop-Auckland ; 23d, at Bainbridge ; on Monday, 26th, we hold our Quarterly Meeting, when I preach at Gomersal at night ; on the 27th, I preach at Misterton ; the 28th, at Kirton-Lindsey ; 29th, at Market-Raisen ; 30th, at Monk-Fryston ; on Monday, October 3d, at Sheffield ; 4th, at Maberley ; 5th, at the Brunswick chapel, Liverpool, for the infant-school.

“Tell Frank I hope he finds a place where to read his Bible.

“What are all forms and ceremonies which leave the heart unchanged? or which go to supersede the necessity of an inward change? If we depart from the simple word of God, we are drifting at sea without helm or pilot. May the Pilot of Galilee ever guide our bark, and we shall make the safe and desired port.”

When the following note was written, Miss Rebecca Newton was with her youngest sister at Colton, near Leeds, and was in a delicate state of health, having lately suffered from an inflammation of the lungs, from which, at one time, there was little hope of a permanent recovery. “After preaching at the Old Chapel yesterday morning, I rode to Colton, where I remained with the dear girls till after four o’clock in the afternoon. Rebecca I fancy is not so strong as formerly. We had much, to me most interesting, conversation on her spiritual state. She never spoke so freely to me before on that subject. She showed me a paper containing an account of her religious experience. We wept and rejoiced together. I wish that all who are dear to us could have heard her conversation with me.

“What is this world compared with another? What will it matter in a very few years, at most, whether we were rich or poor, high or low? The overwhelming consideration is, Are we living for eternity? for heaven? O my dear Elizabeth, I cannot convey in language the impression which I at this moment feel of the insignificance of the world, and the value and importance of living, saving religion! *We* are far on our journey home. God grant that those whom we shall leave behind may follow us to heaven! With love to all, and MANY prayers for God’s blessing upon all, I am,” &c.

The subjoined lines, which were written at the same

time, were addressed to the two daughters at Colton, and especially to Rebecca, whose health and salvation awakened all the yearnings of the father's heart :—“ My dear children, let me tell you how much I have rejoiced on account of what I yesterday read. Let not my loved Rebecca think that mine were tears of sorrow. They were tears of tenderness and joy. Fear not. You are building on the ‘sure foundation:’ and try to venture more fully on Christ, while you calmly, prayerfully, and believingly wait for a clearer evidence of your acceptance in the Beloved. ‘God bless my dear girls!’ is the earnest prayer of their affectionate father.”

In the spring of 1837, Mr. Newton again visited Cornwall on a Missionary Deputation; and there he was again welcomed by immense masses of people, among whom he was unspeakably happy. The incidents which were connected with that journey, and the feelings of his heart when he once more mingled with the Cornish Methodists, are described in the following extract from a letter which he wrote at Camborne on the 18th of March, and addressed to Mrs. Newton :—“ After a journey of near four hundred miles, I am in perfect health, and in the house of a kind friend, James Budge, Esq., where I have every comfort that I can enjoy while from *home*. You would hear of the large congregation at Huddersfield. I went that night with the Bentleys; and Mrs. Bentley would get up, and walk with me to the toll-gate in Lockwood, to meet the coach at eight o'clock the next morning.

“ I preached at Bristol on Tuesday night, where the gleanings amounted to far more than the sheaves of the respected reapers who went before me.

“ I then came in the mail-coach to Exeter, and on the

mail to Truro, nearly two hundred miles, without stopping an hour.

“We had an excellent meeting here on Thursday night, and one of still greater interest at Hayle last night. I preach here this evening (Saturday), and then go to Redruth and Penzance to-morrow. I shall be at Falmouth on the 26th, and Truro on the 27th and 28th.

“It is to me very gratifying to find, after an absence of twelve or fourteen years from this part of Cornwall, spacious chapels erected in nearly all the large towns, and Methodism in a very healthy state. The Societies and congregations are grave and thoughtful; and nothing will do but what is serious and solid.

“I find my visit announced in the Cornish papers, as though I were some mighty personage, who had honoured the county with my presence. But ‘who am I? and what is my father’s house?’ O that our gracious God may deign to make my labours here a blessing to many! I know you are uniting with me in prayer for this.

“The people swarm like bees. In a distance of seventeen square miles, we have one hundred and thirty chapels. Joseph Carne, Esq., was in the chair both nights. He has recently been made a County Magistrate. It is pleasing to see a man of such science and wealth, evidently living in a state of high religious enjoyment, and zealous for its extension in the world.

“I am happy to say our collections, thus far, have been very considerably above those of the last year; and I doubt not that thus they will continue to the end.”

In addition to the places which are mentioned in this

letter, Mr. Newton preached at St. Ives, Helstone, St. Austell, Bodmin, and at Sidmouth and Bristol on his way home.

After affording his assistance at Missionary Anniversaries in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Bristol, and other places of less note, he crossed the Channel to attend the Irish Conference in Cork. Thence he wrote to Mrs. Newton on the 6th of July: "Dr. Bunting left for Bristol on Tuesday, so that I am acting here as President. As such, I had to deliver the charge on Tuesday evening, and last evening to take the chair at a public meeting; and, as such, I must preach to-night.

"The kindness and hospitality of my Irish friends are superabundant. We have had a happy Conference. The Lord is with His servants, and the Protestant feeling here is gaining ground. Everything I have seen and heard of Popery, since I came to this land of saints, has tended to increase my horror at the whole system. May God preserve all who are dear to us from its wiles, and its masked and unmasked wickedness!

"I had a very good passage from Knob's Point, (South Wales,) to Waterford, one hundred and twelve miles. From Waterford I came to Clonmel that afternoon, and remained at the hotel for the Dublin mail to Cork the next morning. It was the market-day at Clonmel; and I had an opportunity of witnessing the practical character of Popery in that town.

"I expect to sail for Dublin to-morrow afternoon, at five o'clock, in company with many brethren.

"I imagine I see dear Rebecca, and her old pony, slowly and with dignity moving along. Would that I could walk beside them! Give their father's love to

the dear girls and Frank. I hope he is redeeming the time."

The English Conference of 1837 was held in Leeds, the place of Mr. Newton's residence. He again sustained the office of Secretary, and the late Rev. Edmund Grindrod was the President,—a man of sound intellect, and of singular prudence and fidelity. For a few weeks the duties of his secretaryship occupied his undivided attention, and confined him at home; but as soon as the Conference concluded its sittings, he resumed, without delay, his extensive journeyings, and the herculean labours in the pulpit and on the Missionary platform, in which, for many years, he had been engaged; so that, in the course of the next twelve months, he not only supplied his own Circuit on the Lord's day, but visited upwards of one hundred and eighty places, in compliance with invitations which he had received, for the purpose of advancing the work of God both in its home and foreign departments; and this was nothing more than a specimen of the labours which he voluntarily undertook from year to year.

When the spring arrived, we find him taking a leading part in the Anniversaries of the Auxiliary Missionary Societies of the Liverpool and Birmingham Districts, and at the Annual Meeting of the Parent Society in London; and in the month of June he was again in Dublin, attending the Irish Conference. Writing thence to Mrs. Newton, he says: "We had a rough passage to this city. It was a dismal night, and we shipped some tremendous seas; but we arrived safe. We had the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, &c., &c., in full dress, at the Abbey-street chapel on Sunday. The collection amounted to the sum of one hundred pounds. Notwithstanding the loss to

our Societies of two hundred persons by emigration, we have an increase of two hundred and twenty-one members. To God's name be the praise !

“ One of the young men who are to be received into full connexion, whom I have just examined by the request of the President, is a convert from Popery. O that some who are dear to us had heard his testimony ! I am in perfect health, and quite at home in the house of Mr. Owen.”

The English Conference of 1838 was held in Bristol, and will ever be memorable because of the arrangements which were then made for celebrating the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism, and the results to which those arrangements led. In addition to this, it was remarkable for the unanimity of the Ministers who were present, and the spiritual influence that attended its public religious services. Mr. Newton acted as the Secretary ; and in a letter to his wife he says : “ We have had some most blessed meetings during the Conference. Would that you and the children could have been here ! We have an increase of more than four thousand members in the Societies during the year.

“ The Stationing Committee have pronounced that I must have a man to do my week-day work, while I am able to do this extra service. I am the Lord's to live, to labour, to suffer, to die. May I be more fully sanctified and made meet for the Master's use ! Several Preachers' sons are again coming forward into our Ministry.”

The celebration of the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism had for some years been a subject of conversation in the Body, but a difficulty had arisen respecting the proper time. It is believed that the matter was first recommended by Mr. Butterworth, who suggested that Mr. Wesley's ordination should be the event celebrated. But to this

it was objected, that, according to Mr. Wesley's own account, he was not converted at the time of his ordination; and it would be a strange inconsistency for the whole Methodist Connexion, who insist upon personal conversion to God as indispensable in a Minister, to appoint a time for rendering solemn and united thanks to God for the ordination of an unconverted man. The project was therefore postponed; and it was finally determined to celebrate the Centenary of the commencement of the United Societies, the first of which was formed in London in the autumn of the year 1739. At that time the Wesleys entered upon an independent course of action, having for its object the revival of spiritual religion; for up to that period they had, from the time at which they found peace with God through faith in the sacrifice of Christ, been in some sort connected with the Moravian Brethren, through whose instrumentality they were led into the way of righteousness.

During the sittings of the Conference in Bristol a Committee was appointed to prepare a general outline of the manner in which the Centenary might be the most profitably celebrated: the Conference accepted the proposals of the Committee, and directed that a larger Committee should meet in Manchester in the following autumn, to fill up the outline, and prepare the details of the plan; directing, at the same time, that, in connexion with acts of devotion, pecuniary contributions should be presented as thank-offerings for objects of a directly religious nature.

The larger Committee accordingly met in Manchester on the 7th of November, 1838, consisting of about two hundred and fifty Ministers and gentlemen belonging to

the Wesleyan body, convened from various parts of England and Ireland, including many of the men who had long been distinguished by their zeal, fidelity, and disinterestedness in support of the sacred cause. No meeting that was ever held in relation to Wesleyan Methodism surpassed this in Christian feeling and pious liberality. Aged men spoke with deep emotion of the benefits which they and their families had received by means of the Methodist doctrine and institutions; and young men, just rising into life and usefulness, followed in the same strain; the holy lives and happy deaths of near relations were in many instances called to remembrance; till the entire assembly seemed to be lost in gratitude, astonishment, and holy love. In not a few instances, individuals confessed that they had risen from humble life to wealth and respectability by means of personal conversion; religion having awakened the intellect, stimulated to diligence and industry, and secured for them the public confidence.

The state of the country with respect to religion and morals before the rise of Methodism; the manner in which the Wesleys were brought to the saving knowledge of God, and thus prepared for the work to which they were called; the self-denial and perseverance with which they fulfilled their mission; their magnanimity and patience in the midst of fierce opposition both from the press and from lawless mobs; their acceptance of lay-helpers in the prosecution of their great undertaking; the faithful labourers whom it pleased God to raise up as their assistants; and the wonderful success with which their combined efforts were crowned, not only in the United Kingdom, but in America and in various parts of the heathen world;—these

and kindred subjects were adverted to with tears of thankfulness to the God of all grace, and every heart expanded with the sentiments expressed by the Prophet: "Praise the Lord, proclaim His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth." The meeting in Manchester was continued through three days, and even then many of the persons who composed it were reluctant to separate.

It was here resolved that central meetings should be held in various parts of England and Ireland; and at these places the appointed deputations were received with a cordiality which was every way suited to the occasion. Centenary Meetings were then extended to Circuits, and even to the principal Societies; so that the holy flame which was kindled in Manchester spread, in the course of the year, from Penzance to Inverness, and from Bandon to Belfast, and the extreme north of Ireland.

At the Manchester meeting the key-note was struck as to the character of the contributions that should be presented, by a communication from a widow lady, upon whom the providence of God had smiled, and whose family with herself were greatly benefited by the Wesleyan Ministry and other institutions. She announced her intention to contribute a thousand guineas. Others, stimulated by so noble an example, promised the same amount; smaller sums, corresponding with the ability of the parties, were everywhere freely given. "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord." The sum of £80,000 was mentioned as the lowest amount at which the Connexion should aim in the Centenary contributions. Yet

such was the spirit of pious liberality that came upon the people, that about £216,000 were raised ; by means of which most important and seasonable assistance was afforded to the Theological Institution, the Chapel Trusts, the Foreign Missions, Worn-out Ministers and Widows, the Schools at Kingswood and Woodhouse-Grove, the day-schools of Methodism ; and a donation of £1,000 was presented out of the Centenary Fund to the British and Foreign Bible Society, in furtherance of its sacred objects.

To the minds of persons who were not present at any of these Centenary Meetings, it is impossible to convey an adequate apprehension of the holy joy by which they were characterized. Considerable sums were given in affectionate remembrance of the pious dead ; for the living members of the church felt that, by virtue of their union with Christ the Head, they were still one with those that sleep in Jesus, and are present with Him in the heavenly paradise. "Young men and maidens, old men and children" combined, with heart and voice, to "praise the name of the Lord," feeling that "His name alone is excellent," and that "His glory is above the heavens."

Many of these meetings were favoured with the presence and services of Mr. Newton. No man was better prepared to enter into the feelings of the people that were present ; no man contributed more largely to render the meetings instructive and edifying ; no man more thoroughly understood the real nature of Wesleyan Methodism, as a revival of religion in its happiness, vitality, and power ; no man was more fully imbued with its spirit, or had done more to promote its advancement ; no living man had witnessed its effects upon so wide a scale ; and

therefore no man had a juster title to exult in its triumphs. At the Manchester meeting thanks were, with great propriety, tendered to him for his devout and animating counsel; and in the General Report of the Centenary Fund, it is truly said, that the "celebration was aided by the Secretary of the Conference, who attended most of the central meetings, and by his warm-hearted appeals greatly promoted both the religious and pecuniary objects of the Centenary."

Towards the close of this memorable Methodistic year, Mr. Newton thus speaks of the reception which he met with in Scotland, and of his labours there, in a letter to his wife:—

"EDINBURGH, *July 17th*, 1839.

"I JUST had time to take dinner at Stockton on the day I left you, preached at Sunderland in the evening, and went that night in a late coach to Newcastle. I came by the Jedburgh and Melross line of road to this city the following day, and arrived in time to take part in the service with the President that evening.

"On Wednesday we went to Glasgow; and here we had an excellent Missionary Meeting that evening. The next morning we had a Centenary breakfast, and at one o'clock I preached in St. George's church to a large congregation: Dr. Smith, the Minister, was most kind and brotherly. Dr. Forbes spoke at our Missionary Meeting. On Friday night I preached in our Tradeston chapel, and arrived here on Saturday evening by the boat. We had two large congregations yesterday. Several Clergymen were there in the evening. The Rev. Dr. B. (Episcopal) told me he should be happy to see me in his pulpit.

"This evening we hold our Centenary Meeting here; in

the morning I start by the six o'clock coach for Glasgow; and then go by steam to Greenock, where I am requested to preach in the large parish-church in the evening. What a change has taken place in the public mind respecting us! I hope to be in Belfast on Thursday next. May I be enabled to make the best use of the extraordinary opportunities for doing good, which Providence has given me in this country! My two doctors were hearers last night. Dr. John called upon Dr. Coldstream to bring him to the kirk to hear their old patient. Mrs. Drummond and Jane are very kind, and we talk over old times. We often wish you were here. I had great liberty in St. George's church."

At the commencement of the Centenary Conference, which was held in Liverpool, he writes in a still more joyful strain. Addressing his daughters, he says: "This has been a glorious year to Methodism. Nearly seventeen thousand members have been added to our Societies. To God's name be all the praise! We have also one hundred and eighteen candidates for our Ministry. We do not ask, as if it were a doubtful matter, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' We have glorious news from the Mission-stations, especially from New-Zealand and Africa. In spite of infidelity, Popery, and worldly cupidity, the Gospel is doing its work, as the power of God unto salvation.

"Probably you have heard that Mr. Lessey is our President, and that I have again been appointed to the office of Secretary.

"We are likely to have a happy Conference. The sentiments of the brethren made a most triumphant outburst on the education question, when thanks were given to the President and Secretary of the past year.

“I am more and more convinced that Divine Providence designs Wesleyan Methodism to be the great moral break-water, right and left, against the inundations of infidelity, Socinianism, superstition, and false religion. May we be faithful!

“We are to have a high day on Monday next. The Ex-President will deliver his Centenary sermon. God bless you all!”

The Centenary Conference was in full accordance with these anticipations. It was very numerously attended both by Ministers and laymen, from all parts of the kingdom, and even from Ireland, and was characterized throughout by harmony and concord, and by a spirit of humble and earnest devotion.

CHAPTER X.

THE Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America is divided into many distinct Conferences, which meet annually, under the presidency of the Bishops; and, in addition to these, there is a General Conference, which is held every fourth year, and consists of delegates, who are sent from all the other Conferences. Between that General Conference and the British Conference a fraternal intercourse is maintained by means of Representatives, who are alternately sent from one to the other.

At the Centenary Conference, which was held in Liverpool in the year 1839, it was requisite that the Ministers then assembled should select one of their number to represent them to their American brethren. Every eye was, of course, directed to Mr. Newton, as the most suitable man to undertake this service. His Christian and manly bearing, his self-possession, his pulpit-talents, and especially the evangelical character of his preaching, recommended him as eminently qualified for the task; and hence the Conference requested him, if he found it practicable, to be the bearer of their salutations to their Transatlantic brethren.

When this proposal was first made, he declined to give a direct answer. There was in him a willingness to comply with the wishes of the Conference; but having for so many years, and to so great an extent, taxed the forbearance of his wife by frequent absence from home, he felt that he ought not to undertake this mission unless she were a consenting party. Her answer to his letter, in which he had stated the project, is worthy of her high

character, and in perfect consistency with that unselfish course which she had invariably pursued from the time of her marriage. She doubtless thought that, being blessed with such a husband, she ought to share in the inconvenience which was unavoidably connected with his popularity. If her sacrifices were great, so were her privileges. It is not every woman that has the honour of being the wife of a Robert Newton. Her answer is as follows:—
“The vows of the Lord, you know, are upon me; and I think I have never interfered with anything that appeared to be your duty to the church. If therefore it is the opinion of your brethren, that you would be most in your providential way in going to America, I will make no objection, whatever I may feel. Our God can and I trust will preserve you. But when they take into consideration the fact, that your services as a beggar would be lost during the two months that you would be upon the sea, and how much you are and are still likely to be absent from your family, and the loss of a good father’s presence and example to his children, they will perhaps think that you may be as useful, if you be allowed to remain in your own country, where, should you be unwell, or should those who are dear to you be so, a few hours or days might bring us together.”

With this permission, he consented to cross the Atlantic Ocean as a “messenger of the churches,” sent to convey to the Methodists of America the greetings of their English brethren; thus recognising the principle that the Wesleyan Methodists are one throughout the world. The American General Conference was to be held in the month of May following: it was therefore necessary that he should embark early in the spring; and with a reference to this under-

taking, he made his arrangements during the intervening months, taking leave of his numerous friends in different parts of the country, requesting an interest in their prayers, and expressing a hope that they should meet again at their religious Anniversaries with a joy equal to that which they had long been accustomed to feel.

A deep sympathy in his behalf was awakened, and many trembled at the thought, that a life of such transcendent value should be exposed to the perils of a long voyage. One incident may be mentioned as illustrative of the affection with which he was regarded. He attended a Missionary Meeting at Bridlington-quay, in company with Mr. William Dawson,—a man of kindred spirit, of great energy and versatility of genius, but occasionally eccentric in his manner. In the course of his speech Mr. Dawson referred to his friend Newton's anticipated departure from England; and then, addressing the Chairman, he said, "By your leave, Sir, we will sing a verse." Then, walking to Mr. Newton, who was with him on the platform, he took hold of the breast of Mr. Newton's coat, and gave out,—

"Through all the changing scenes of life,
Thy servant, Lord, defend;
And O, his life of mercies crown
With a triumphant end!"

The entire congregation rose simultaneously, and sang the lines with heart and voice; and the Representative to America stood in mute astonishment, overpowered with the unexpected burst of kind and generous feeling. His friend Dawson was no poet, but he contrived to make a tolerable stanza by placing in juxta-position the lines of different hymns; and the stanza which was thus formed was a means of expressing the pious and benevolent sentiments of a

Christian assembly in reference to a Minister whom they esteemed and loved, and whose services had often excited their joy and admiration.

In the prospect of his departure from England the godly Mr. Entwisle wrote a concise and characteristic letter, of which the following is a copy :—“I trust the Lord will be with you on your voyage across the Atlantic, and that He will open to you a great door and effectual in the United States. You will have our prayers in these parts, and the prayers of thousands more. May hundreds of sinners have to date the commencement of their everlasting happiness from the hour when you shall preach to them Jesus Christ, and Him crucified !”

When it was determined that Mr. Newton should visit America, several of his friends proposed to accompany him, partly for their own gratification, and partly as a mark of respect for him; but when the hour of his embarkation came, not one of them was forthcoming but the faithful Joseph Souter, Esq., of Castle-Donington. The vessel that was to convey him across the Atlantic, bore the name of “The United States;” it was commanded by Captain Britton, and sailed from the port of Liverpool on the morning of April 1st. When Mr. and Mrs. Newton arrived, they found Mr. Souter on board, which to them was an occasion of great thankfulness; for she especially felt that if any evil should befall her husband, either by land or by water, he would have a friend on whose kindness, judgment, and fidelity, the utmost reliance might be placed.

When the moment of separation came, Mrs. Newton displayed quite as much fortitude as her husband. She remained on shore, surrounded by relations and friends;

and he remained on the deck of the ship, with his eyes fixed upon them, until they faded from his sight, and the waving of their handkerchiefs was no longer visible. He then observed to Mr. Souter, that the friends who were connected with the Oxford-place chapel in Leeds, to whom he sustained the pastoral relation, had agreed to meet at that hour for the purpose of united prayer, that he might have a prosperous voyage by the will of God; and that he would now retire into his berth to unite his supplications with theirs. At this time the ship was drawn by a steamer, the wind being directly opposed to them. When he had ended his devotions, and again appeared among his fellow-voyagers, the wind had veered round, so as to be directly in their favour, and the steam-vessel was no longer needed. One of the sailors exclaimed, "I am sure we have some lucky person on board;" and some of the company invited Mr. Newton's attention to the favourable change in the wind; when he answered, "Gentlemen, there is an intimate connexion between prayer and Providence."

When he took leave of his family, he informed them, that he intended, in all his journeyings, during his absence, to make the One Hundred and Twenty-first Psalm the subject of his special meditation, for the purpose of sustaining his trust in the providential care of the Almighty; and he recommended them, in this respect, to follow his example, till they should see him again.

The cabin-passengers consisted of a Jew, a Romanist, four or five English people, three Scotch, four Irish, and one American; the steerage-passengers, being mostly emigrants, were more than two hundred; and these with the Captain and seamen amounted to two hundred and fifty-five souls. Mr. Newton felt his responsibility with

respect to these people, seeing that for a time they were all placed within the range of his influence. To the Captain he offered his services as Chaplain during the voyage, and they were readily accepted; so that he conducted family-prayer every night and morning; and on the Sabbath-day he preached, first in the cabin, and then in the other part of the vessel to the steerage-passengers. All attended family-worship but the Jew and the Romanist; yet the latter of these conscientious gentlemen was ready to gamble with any persons who had the folly to risk their money and try their skill against him. Often did Mr. Newton engage his fellow-voyagers in conversation on the nature of true religion, and the immense benefits that are connected with it; at the same time pointing out the vanity of worldly amusements and the evils of gambling, in which he found that some of them indulged when he had retired to rest in the evening.

During the early part of the voyage his friend Souter suffered dreadfully from sickness; and at one time was so reduced that serious apprehensions were entertained as to whether or not he could recover. The health of Mr. Newton was invariably good. He was as free from ailments even in a storm at sea, as he was upon the roof of a stage-coach. Yet he did not escape every kind of disaster. One morning he rose early; the wind was very high, and the sea in a state of "terribly sublime agitation;" a sudden squall carried away the top-gallant mast, and, as the deck where he stood was wet and slippery, he fell with great force upon his right shoulder, dislocated the second finger of his right hand, and so hurt his shoulder, that he thought it also was out of joint.

He pulled the bone of his finger again into its socket with his left hand; and then called to the Captain, requesting him to take hold of his right hand and pull, so as to reduce the shoulder. But this was unnecessary; for the shoulder, there is reason to believe, had sustained no injury beyond that of a severe bruise, or a wrench. Yet the pain continued for several months. A passenger who witnessed the accident, and observed the calm self-possession of the sufferer,—acting the part of a surgeon with respect to the dislocated finger, and then giving directions concerning his shoulder, at the same time that the pain in both places was severe,—exclaimed, “I never saw such nerves before!”

Mr. Newton's ministry was successful by sea as well as by land. He earnestly desired and prayed that he might be a means of spiritual benefit to the people who sailed with him in the ship; and to some extent God gave him the desire of his heart. As they approached the American coast, the emigrants of course looked forward with feelings of hope to the land where they expected to spend the residue of their days. Yet there was among them one exception,—a man whose moral feelings had been blunted by infidel speculations, and who had left his wife and children in a state of destitution; intending to provide for himself in America, and leave them to starve or to be supported by charity. Under Mr. Newton's impressive sermons this unhappy wanderer was convinced of the truth, and therefore of his own guilt and danger, and resolved, immediately on his arrival at New-York, to return to his family by the earliest conveyance. According to the statement of Mr. Souter, the penitent man fulfilled his purpose, became a good husband and

father, joined the Methodist Society, and became a new man in Christ Jesus.

As the ship approached the end of her voyage, a pilot came on board, unlike a British tar, wearing a drab coat and trousers. He was a shrewd fellow, but confessed that he had not been in any place of worship during the last fourteen years. Taking a silver coin out of his pocket, he said to Mr. Newton, "This is the God that we worship in America. This is the fellow, Sir." Yet he promised to hear Mr. Newton preach in New-York, if it were possible.

Our travellers landed a little after mid-day, on Sunday, April 26th, and immediately engaged a coach to convey them to the house of Francis Hall, Esq., in Hudson-street, where they were most cordially and hospitably received. The arrival of Mr. Newton was soon noised abroad in New-York, and friends came in considerable numbers to welcome him, and to invite him to preach in the evening. To this proposal he was not disinclined, having for many years been accustomed to preach almost every day, and during the last month having preached only on the Sabbath. Short as the notice was, the church was crowded in every part; and a gentleman, who was said to sustain a high office in the city, not being able to obtain an entrance at the door, procured a ladder, and entered through one of the windows. Mr. Souter, being the companion of Mr. Newton, was allowed to sit within the communion-rails,—an honour which he found is not conceded to laymen in the American churches; and this gave him an opportunity of observing the effect of the sermon upon the congregation. Of this advantage he afterwards availed himself whenever he could. In this case, he states that he never before saw a congregation

present such unmistakable signs of pleasure. The subject of the sermon was the happiness which results from a personal faith in Christ, and love to Him, as a Saviour from sin. At one time the people seemed to be scarcely able to refrain from clapping their hands; and, in going out of the church, he heard a gentleman say, "This is beyond grand." The text was, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) Having just left the ship, he preached in his black stock; but some of the Americans said that, "although his appearance just then was not very clerical, he was a gentleman of no ordinary talent, who well understood his business."

Next day in the evening an important Missionary Meeting was held in the Green-street church, which was densely crowded. When Mr. Newton's name was announced, the entire assembly rose from their seats, as a mark of respect for the distinguished stranger. This for a time almost overpowered him; but he soon recovered himself, and spoke for about two hours; and several times, in the course of his address, the crowd could not be restrained from clapping their hands,—a practice which had not been known in that place on any previous occasion. An aged man from the country wiped the tears from his eyes with the sleeve of his coat, saying to the person who sat next to him, "We shall have no powdery ware now, I guess." Mr. Newton and his travelling companion, with their families, were made life-members of the Missionary Society, some persons paying a handsome sum to secure for them this honour. The collection at the meeting amounted to upwards of a

thousand dollars, being the largest that was ever made in behalf of the Society.

On the following day Mr. Newton visited one of the colleges, some parts of the city, and the Methodist book-establishment, which is of large extent, and of inestimable influence and utility, sending forth from month to month a vast amount of Christian literature through the various States of the Union; and in the evening he preached to another overflowing congregation in the Wesley church, where he made a successful appeal in behalf of the Society for the Relief of Aged Ministers, Widows, and Orphans. Many Ministers and College Professors were present. The sermon produced a deep impression upon the people; and one man, as the congregation retired, said, "Brother Hall, if Mr. Newton will come and take a church in New-York, we will work our finger-nails off to support him and his family."

With this service he concluded his labours in New-York for the present; and the Editor of one of the newspapers said: "If we may judge from the specimen given us on this occasion, the prominent traits of Mr. Newton's oratory are a remarkable simplicity of manner, and a remarkable aptness in explaining and illustrating the subject in hand. There was nothing of what might be called rhetorical display, no far-fetched metaphors, no straining and swelling after big words and flowery expressions; none of that clap-trap eloquence, which, although it may set a man a crying, or laughing, or shouting, makes him feel afterward as if he had been imposed upon. It was the simplicity of nature, and the eloquence of truth, which brought tears to the eye, and carried conviction to the heart. We were delighted, not

with the man, but with the sermon. We are glad that Mr. Newton has come among us. He will teach us, what in this country we have need to learn, that true eloquence does not consist, as many suppose, in bombastical flourish and rhetorical flowers, but in strong ideas, clothed in simple language, and delivered in a natural manner." In another of the New-York papers, it is stated that his preaching produced a stronger effect than that of any other man since the days of Whitefield; and that, during his stay, in the places that he visited the theatres would all be deserted.

Early in the morning of Wednesday, April 29th, Mr. Newton, accompanied by his faithful friend, and by about three hundred Ministers, left New-York for Philadelphia, on his way to Baltimore, where the General Conference was to be held; travelling partly by water, and partly by railway. At Philadelphia he was received, in the kindest possible manner, by Mr. Carrigans, and found that notice had been given that he would preach that evening. The rain was very heavy; but the church was crowded almost to suffocation. Before the service commenced, Mr. Souter was introduced within the communion-rails, in front of the pulpit, and was mistaken by the immense assembly for Mr. Newton. The choir had prepared an anthem, which they intended to sing in honour of the distinguished stranger, and as a welcome to their city. This they sang in their best style, the congregation joining as well as they were able, and all looking at Mr. Souter; who felt that he was receiving the respect which did not belong to him, and which the people did not intend to pay him; they probably wondering that he should betray any signs of uneasiness. When the

anthem was finished, Mr. Newton entered the church, and ascended the pulpit, and the choristers and people perceived that they had mistaken their man; but it was too late to correct the error. When the service was ended, and the case was stated to Mr. Newton, he was highly amused, and said to his friend Souter, "You have taken the shine off me." In Philadelphia he was somewhat surprised to find himself addressed both by men and women, and even by elegant young ladies, as "Brother Newton;" a title which he found to be usually given to Ministers.

In the city of Philadelphia he stood upon the site which was consecrated by the preaching of Mr. Whitefield just one hundred years before; and in his journal he pertinently observes: "It is remarkable that not an orphan-house, a church, or a society, founded by Whitefield, remains; while the Wesleyans number between seven and eight hundred thousand members, and upwards of three thousand Ministers. But Whitefield did not institute class-meetings, and Wesley did. There are now seventeen Wesleyan churches in this city, with two hundred thousand inhabitants."

Having spent the night in Philadelphia, he went on board a steamer the next morning for Baltimore, sailing along the Delaware, with a vast number of passengers, among whom was the Governor of Ohio, who conversed in a free and affable manner, and confessed that he also belonged to the great Wesleyan family. It was observed that the passengers of both sexes were all engaged in reading newspapers, which are here sold at a cheap rate.

After an agreeable journey, prosecuted partly by land, and partly by water, he arrived safely at Baltimore early

in the afternoon. Two of the Bishops met him at his landing; a carriage was waiting for him; and he soon found himself in the house of Samuel Harden, Esq., where he was received with every mark of respect and cordiality. The city was full of strangers, many of whom had come on account of the Conference; and others to attend a political convention, which consisted of about twenty-five thousand people, from all parts of the Union.

On the 1st of May the General Conference was opened, consisting of the six Bishops of the Church, and delegates from the twenty-eight Conferences scattered through the various States. Bishop Roberts read a chapter of Holy Scripture, and Bishop Hedding engaged in prayer. The simplicity and unaffected piety of these venerable men seemed to carry Mr. Newton back to the second century of the Christian church, when godliness prevailed in all its purity and fervour, and the Pastors of the flock were dead to the world and all its pomp. Bishop Roberts, being the senior Bishop, presided on the first day. He desired Mr. Newton to come and sit by him, and then in the kindest manner introduced him to the Conference, all the members rising up to welcome him. He made a short speech, reserving his official address for a future opportunity, when the letter from the British Conference should be read. A vote was then passed, authorizing him to sit in the Conference, and to vote on all questions that might arise. A chair and a table for his use were then placed at the right hand of the Bishops, and the Conference requested him to preach as often as possible during his stay in the city.

Mr. Souter remarked that the Ministers generally presented a very respectable appearance, were more fashionably

dressed than their brethren in England usually are, and were highly intelligent. In the progress of the Conference Mr. Newton was impressed with the fact, that the time was mainly occupied by the speeches of young men, Ministers of age and experience being scarcely able to obtain a hearing. Availing himself therefore of a favourable opportunity, he spoke of the respect which is due to age, and especially to aged Ministers, who have been long familiar with the work of God, and whose range of observation has been widely extended. These are the men, he observed, who are eminently qualified to give advice in ecclesiastical affairs; for their counsels are not speculative, but practical. The Bishops shed tears under this seasonable address, and no one attempted any reply.

At the time of Mr. Newton's visit, the city of Baltimore contained about one hundred thousand inhabitants, eleven thousand of whom belonged to the Methodist body, and occupied sixteen churches. In one of the largest of these Mr. Newton was appointed to preach at eleven o'clock in the morning of Sunday, May 3d; but before nine o'clock, while he was taking his breakfast, a messenger arrived, informing him that the church and street were full of people, and that some thousands had gone away. He therefore hastened to the place, began the service before ten o'clock, and afterwards assisted in the administration of the Lord's supper; having engaged, in compliance with the request of the crowds who could not gain admission into the church, to preach in the open air at five o'clock in the evening.

In the mean time, application was made to Judge Bruce for his permission that Mr. Newton should preach in Monument-square, which it was estimated would contain

about fifteen thousand people. Leave was granted, and a gentleman of the Presbyterian denomination offered a sort of balcony in front of his house as a standing-place for the Preacher. About two-thirds of the square were filled, and the windows of the houses crowded with hearers. Bishop Hedding and Dr. Bangs stood with him, one on the right hand, and the other on his left. Several members of the Government were there, among whom were Clay and Webster; and, as the political convention was to be held the next day, there were persons present from every State of the Union. It was thought that from ten to twelve thousand persons heard the sermon; for his voice extended to the limits of the crowd, and was sustained without failure to the end of the service. The vast assemblage behaved with the strictest decorum. The text was, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Mr. Souter says, that the singing was powerful and harmonious; that the people listened with profound attention to the discourse, which seemed to rise in energy as the Preacher advanced; and that its telling effect was seen in the tears which rolled down the cheeks of multitudes. Under that sermon three infidels were convinced of the truth, and turned to Christ in penitence and faith; two of whom became Ministers in the Methodist Church, and the third an upright and useful member in Baltimore. One of these men, who had obtained some notoriety as an unbeliever, was observed to listen with earnest attention to the sermon, and at the conclusion of the last prayer to utter a fervent "Amen." When the service had concluded, many of the people still lingered, apparently unwilling to leave the spot; thus exemplifying

the feeling which Milton has ascribed to the father of the human race, after he had listened to the discourse of a heavenly messenger :—

“ The angel ended, and in Adam’s ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix’d to hear.”

When the Conference assembled the next morning, the entire body united in a request that Mr. Newton would preach to them on the following Wednesday, at eleven o’clock; and at the same time he received a pressing invitation from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to preach in their Grand Hall in the forenoon of the next Sabbath-day. The Bishops told him that he must comply. In the prospect of two such services, coming close together, his prayer was, “ Be Thou my helper, O Lord ! ”

On the next day the letter from the British Conference was read, and Mr. Newton, as the Representative of that body, addressed the American brethren in a speech of about an hour’s length. Among other subjects of interest and importance, he spoke freely concerning the evil of slavery, which is, in fact, the crying sin and the plague-spot of America. On this subject he declared that there is but one opinion in the English and Irish Conferences; and that he could in this respect answer for the entire Methodist Connexion in Great Britain. They all deplore it as a sore evil, which ought to be forthwith abolished. At the same time they sympathize with their American brethren, in the difficult and delicate circumstances in which they are placed with regard to the question of emancipation; and hope that the American Conference will re-affirm their own testimony in their Minutes, and unite with their fellow-citizens in

such measures as are likely to bring this sin to a speedy termination. The address was heard with deep attention, and was followed by a unanimous request that it might be printed.

The next morning, the people began to assemble long before the time appointed for the public service. Ministers of various denominations were present, and the church was densely crowded. Mr. Newton read as his text, in his own peculiar manner, "The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as He hath promised!" (Deut. i. 11.) The effect of his sermon was most extraordinary. For a time the utmost stillness prevailed in the congregation; and as the discourse was addressed particularly to the Ministers who formed the Conference, it might be expected that they would control their feelings, however strongly they might be excited. But, ere long, both they and the rest of the congregation were carried beyond all ordinary bounds. Their eyes were suffused with tears; they sobbed and wept aloud; they shouted for joy; they clapped their hands; while the Preacher, in strains the most eloquent and impressive, expatiated upon the great things which the Lord had done both for them and their fathers, and the innumerable and endless benefits and blessings that were secured to them by the promises of Him whose goodness and truth can never fail. When the Conference re-assembled, a vote of thanks for the sermon was passed unanimously, with an earnest request for its publication. In reference to this entire service, Mr. Newton remarks in his journal, "The Lord was specially present. Blessed be His holy name!"

The next morning, at eleven o'clock, he preached in the

Exeter-street church, to a large and interesting audience, where he had reason to believe many received spiritual benefit.

In the evening of May 8th, he preached in the Skarpe-street church, to the black and coloured people, who are not allowed to mingle with the whites in their worshipping assemblies ; thus introducing into the church of Christ the odious distinction of caste, in defiance both of the letter and spirit of the New Testament. His text was, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) Mr. Souter says, it was evident that these despised people, many of whom were slaves, knew how to appreciate a good sermon quite as well as their white brethren. A striking thought, or a beautiful illustration, called forth such bursts of feeling among them, that sometimes the Preacher could scarcely hear his own voice. The Class-Leaders were mixed with the assembly to preserve silence ; and a black Preacher, a slave, stood on the pulpit-stairs for the same purpose. When the people wept aloud, or became otherwise excited, he exclaimed, "You must be still, and hear de good word. I could shout as well as any of you : " then placing his hand upon his breast, he added, "De shout is here ; but we must be still." As soon as the sermon was ended, a large sable choir arose in the front gallery, with their music-books in hand, and sang a beautiful anthem, appropriate to the discourse just delivered, which they executed in good style. When Mr. Newton afterwards met any of these people in the city, they never failed to smile, and give him a respectful nod ; recognising him as a friend, while he regarded them as men, and brethren in Christ.

On Saturday, May 9th, Mr. Newton, accompanied by his friend Souter, left Baltimore for Washington, for the purpose of preaching before the American Congress the next morning. He was entertained at the house of Dr. Sewell, a determined teetotaller, where he could get no black tea; and having been prevailed upon to take one or two cups of green, he spent a sleepless night,—no desirable preparation for the important service to which he was pledged. The morning was very rainy; yet the Grand Hall was full of people; and many, who could not obtain admission, remained in the entries, and several hundreds stood all the time. It was said that most of the members of the two Houses of the National Legislature were there. Mr. Newton took his stand directly before the Speaker's chair, and John Quincy Adams, the Ex-President, sat near him. He read as his text, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 8.) Mr. Souter says: "I never witnessed more marked attention than that which was paid by this vast assembly. To me it was most delightful to see my eloquent and popular friend deliver one of his best sermons, with all freedom and energy, in the American House of Representatives. The principal singers in the neighbourhood were present; and I do not remember to have ever heard more delightful melody; so that the entire service was deeply impressive." Mr. Newton confesses that he had "great liberty" in the delivery of his evangelical message before his large and interesting auditory. On the Saturday evening he had heard a debate among the Senators on the subject of public education, to which he made a graceful allusion in his sermon; declaring his

conviction, that all educational schemes are essentially defective, unless they include a knowledge of Christ, and of His Gospel. A Washington newspaper said, in the course of the same week, "The discourse was one of the most powerful and eloquent pulpit-addresses we ever remember to have heard." After the sermon he was introduced to Adams, and to many of the Representatives and Senators. In the afternoon he went by a steamboat to Alexandria, where he had engaged to preach a Missionary sermon. Here he was also attended by a large assembly, which was pervaded by an eminently devout feeling.

The next morning he returned to Washington, where he waited upon Van Buren, the President of the United States, who received him with marked kindness, and expressed his regret that, in consequence of urgent family circumstances, he had been unable to hear him on the previous morning; but added, as a compliment to Mr. Newton, "I understand that, if I had attended the service, I should not have been able to obtain a *seat*." Mr. Newton then paid a short visit to the Congress in session, where, as a mark of respect, he was invited to sit among the Members, his friends who accompanied him being accommodated with seats in the gallery.

After remaining at Washington awhile, he returned to Baltimore, a distance of forty miles, and attended a Missionary Meeting in the evening. Here he received another mark of respect, which to him must have been highly gratifying. The six Bishops, who were all present, Roberts, Hedding, Soule, Andrews, Waugh, and Morris, contributed the requisite sum of money to constitute him a member of the Missionary Society for life; and

other persons in the meeting did the same, to secure this honour for his two sons at home.

On the following morning, Mr. Newton, having engaged to attend the meeting of the Bible Society in New-York, left Baltimore for that city, taking Philadelphia in his way, where he expected to attend a Missionary Meeting; but on his arrival he found that, through some mistake, the requisite information had not been given to the public: he therefore preached in one of the churches, and was grateful to learn that, under the sermon which he delivered there on his way to the Conference, a young merchant and his wife were both convinced of sin, had joined the Methodist Church; and that one of them had obtained peace with God through faith in the blood of the Cross.

At New-York he walked in procession from the American Bible Society's house, to a large building called the "Tabernacle," where the public meeting was held. Here he spoke for near an hour, in the midst of prodigious cheering; especially when he stated that at Washington he had been fortunate enough to find an eagle's nest; that he discovered in it ten half-grown golden eagles, which he would then produce; pledging himself that any banker in New-York would give fifty dollars for them: laying ten gold pieces upon the table. Then, bowing to the Chairman, he said, "Sir, I have the pleasure and honour of presenting this sum to the American National Bible Society, the donation of a member of the Methodist Church at Washington."

He next advocated the Missionary cause at another of the churches in New-York, and also at Brooklyn, and then left the city for Baltimore, to attend the remainder

of the Conference sittings, spending a short time at Philadelphia on his way. Here he attended a Missionary Meeting on the Saturday evening, when some ladies contributed one hundred dollars towards the education of an Indian boy, to be called Robert Newton, as a mark of respect for the popular stranger who then appeared among them. Notice was given that he would preach the next morning at eleven o'clock; but before the hour of nine it was reported to him that the church was full of people, and that no less than two thousand had gone away, unable to gain admission. He preached, but says, in his journal, "I never suffered so much from heat in all my life. Perspiration almost streamed from me, from head to foot." Yet, having changed his linen, he preached in another church in the afternoon, attended by a vast assembly of people, several of whom were persons of distinction.

In the course of a few days an elaborate article appeared in a newspaper which was published in this city, on the subject of Mr. Newton's preaching, evidently written by an acute observer, but of merely secular views, who says not one word concerning the theology of Mr. Newton's sermons, nor of their converting and sanctifying tendency and purpose. The following are the principal points in this writer's criticism. We omit a few sentences, which would not have been introduced if the critic had been accustomed to attend Mr. Newton's ministry. He only heard him once or twice. "We know not," says the journalist, "whether the Rev. Mr. Newton may be taken as a fair representative of the peculiar style of eloquence most popular in England; but if he may, we do not hesitate to assign to her the character of the most civilized nation on the globe. He reminds us of

what has come down of the speeches of Demosthenes ; wanting, it is true, much of his polish, his fire, his impetuosity ; but resembling him in most of the leading characteristics of his style.

“The Rev. Mr. Newton is no bad representative of his nation, so far as air and figure are concerned. Tall, with a well-knit frame, a short neck, broad shoulders, a florid countenance, and a large and massy head, no one could pass him in a crowd without being convinced of his English paternity. We mean no disrespect, but rather a compliment to him, when we say he is the impersonation of John Bull. His mien is erect, and in the pulpit noble.

“The elocution of the Reverend Divine is, for some moments after opening his exordium, peculiarly plain. He does not appear as yet to be at home in his theme ; and though he cannot be said to labour, he does not dazzle. Nothing, however, can prevent the listeners from admiring the richness of his voice, whose every word is music, and whose lower tones especially we have never heard surpassed. Its compass is almost unequalled. Now ringing out clear and silvery, now mellowed into the softest music, and now sinking into a deep, rolling, sonorous bass, it fits itself to every variety of feeling the speaker may wish to arouse.

“When, however, he advances further into his discourse, and begins to grow excited with his theme, all that formerly pleased or disappointed us in his elocution is forgotten, in admiration of the masterly style in which he begins to develop his subject. With a mind clear and penetrating ; a capability of detecting the strong points of the argument at once ; a power of generalization

rarely excelled; a flow of words, at once copious, choice, and nervous; a faculty of dilating on an argument at length, and then compacting all into one sentence; and a fervid, rapid style of speaking, affecting no ornament, but striking home at once to the reason, and, though sometimes tinged with declamation, taking its general hue from logic; he exerts a power over the minds of his audience, which neither a more glowing fancy, a finer elocution, nor a more brilliant style could exert. He is, in fact, of the school of Fox, rather than that of Burke; and, disdaining all needless ornament, is simple even to severity. He seems to have but one aim in view,—to convince his audience. On that he fixes his eye; to it he addresses every nerve; and, like the ancient Greek in the race, he casts off everything that will impede his progress; regardless of all, if he can only win the goal. Sometimes coarse, and often careless, but always nervous, rapid, and logical, he drags his audience along with him by main force, as if he disdained more gentle means. However much, at first, we may question his argument, he never leaves it until he has fastened conviction upon us, seeming to play around the subject for a while, but at last flashing the truth upon us in a single lightning-like sentence.

“We cannot dismiss the subject without expressing our pleasure with the peculiarly practical nature of the Reverend Divine’s discourses. Fine sentences, lofty metaphors, touching pathos may obtain admirers; but it is only solid thought and unanswerable logic that is at last to convince mankind. To this Mr. Newton seems peculiarly fitted. His eloquence is close, vehement, and irresistible; but we cannot better characterize it than by saying, it is like his figure, massy.”

On Monday, May 18th, Mr. Newton returned to Baltimore, where he remained till the 30th, generally attending the sittings of the Conference by day, and preaching or attending public meetings in the evening. Here he was prevailed on to sit to two artists, who were engaged by different friends to paint his portrait. One of them went to hear him preach, in order that he might catch the full expression of his countenance; but as Mr. Newton proceeded in his discourse, the limner forgot his object and his art; his conscience was awakened under the word; he dropped his pencil, and wept like a child.

The following letter, which he wrote on the 26th of May, and addressed to his family in England, presents an interesting picture of his spirit, labours, and circumstances:—

“Having an opportunity of sending this by a friend, who is going to Europe by the ‘British Queen,’ I gladly avail myself of it to tell those who are most dear to me, that, notwithstanding hot weather, cold water, and no supper, I am, thank God, in good health. This I cannot but regard as a special Providence, and the more so when I consider my constant labour in preaching, and speaking at Missionary and other meetings. I have obtained a very thin dress; and yet the perspiration runs down from head to foot. Strawberries and ice cream are very abundant and most delicious here; and I partake freely without any inconvenience.

“I have not been an hour unwell since I set my foot upon this vast continent. Your letter had been detained two days at New-York. When I saw the well known handwriting, I dare say the feelings of my heart were betrayed by my eyes. Several ladies were present; but

for that I cared not. We are at this moment more than three thousand and sixty miles apart; and yet the ties by which we are united are as strong as if we were together.

“The invitations to preach in our churches, and those of other denominations, are so numerous that I might preach every hour of the day. The streets are crowded hours before the time appointed for the service to commence. But the best of all is, the gracious Lord has given me some seals to my ministry in America. Blessed be God!

“Much as I long to see you and old England again, I cannot but regret that I have not another month, to enable me to visit other parts of this continent. Every one says, ‘You must come again, and bring your wife with you.’ How this may be, I know not. I can, however, say, that, though I do not love England less, I like this country better than I did. Never have I preached to such crowds of attentive hearers before. Indeed, I have met with nothing but respect and kindness.

“I have refused all invitations to attend Temperance and Abolition Meetings. Both parties are so violent and ultra, that I cannot but conclude they will defeat their own design. There is also a great deal of what we call ‘Radicalism’ connected with Abolition movements. I have spoken freely in the Conference on the subject; and I hope that what I have said may have some influence on what is here termed the ‘action’ of the Conference.

“I observe all the ‘helps’ in the families where I dine from day to day are sable.

“The next week I am to spend in New-England. If it please God, I shall see you early in July. Give my love to my friends in general; the Preachers, the Howards,

the Doves, the Musgraves, in particular. I hope that Providence will permit me to spend another year in Leeds.

“And now, my dear wife and children, may the Lord bless and take care of you, and bring us in due time together in health and comfort!”

On the day which immediately preceded Mr. Newton's departure from Baltimore, it was announced to the Conference that he was about to retire; and he addressed them to the following effect:—“I am deeply impressed with the value of your time, and the obligations under which you are laid to improve it. But you will permit me to give utterance, as far as possible, to the feelings which agitate my heart. When I left my native land, I could not forget that I was parting from my home, and about to visit a country which I had not seen. But my feet had scarcely touched your shores before I felt myself at home, and found that Methodism is one all over the world. In New-York, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, I have been delighted to meet with friends and brethren, who have one faith, one Redeemer, and one Lord. Had I known that your session would have been protracted beyond this period, no inducement would have prevailed upon me to leave the Conference. But my promise is gone forth, and I must go. The proceedings of this body I have watched with intense interest; for Methodism in all its departments is dear to me, and I am persuaded that you are chosen instruments of God. I have examined your polity, institutions, and operations as a Church; and, considering the immense sway that you wield over public opinion, I cannot be blind to your responsibility. Your system has worked well; and I am

one of those who tenaciously adhere to the maxim, 'Let well alone.'

"I have heard incidental allusions to 'moderate Episcopacy;' but if yours be not a moderate Episcopacy, I do not know what makes one. If there be a prayer for 'moderate Episcopacy,' it is already granted. And as to your Presiding Eldership, I have been asked whether it could not be altered for the better; and whether our system of District-Chairmen might not be more eligible. In dense and populous districts, perhaps it might be so; but as a general plan in your country, it would be utterly impracticable. Your system has done well; and again I say, 'Let well alone.'

"I cannot retire without an expression of my gratitude to the venerable Bishops of this Church. They live in my heart's best affections; and while there is not a man before me who would not be joyfully hailed on our side of the Atlantic, I must express my belief that a visit from the venerable man in the pulpit," (Bishop Soule,) "would create a general and abiding pleasure. And should you send a travelling companion, as I hope you will, my eye is fixed upon a brother who is supporting yon pillar, or the pillar supporting him," (Dr. Bangs,) "who would be most gladly greeted.

"Finally, brethren beloved, I bid you farewell! and may the God of peace grant you His peace! THE LORD BE WITH YOU ALL! AMEN."

The following Resolutions were then adopted by a unanimous vote of the Conference:—

"That we cordially reciprocate the kind sentiments of affection just expressed to this General Conference by the Rev. Robert Newton; and that, while his visit to this

country has served to exalt him in our personal regard, it has contributed to strengthen still more the fraternal ties which bind together the Wesleyan family in Europe and America.

“That we devoutly implore the blessing of God upon him; and pray that He may graciously vouchsafe to our beloved brother a safe return to his home and family, and the Church whose Representative he is to this body.”

The Conference then knelt before God, and Bishop Hedding uttered the following prayer:—“O most blessed Lord, we adore Thee, that Thou hast vouchsafed unto us Thy grace; that we have been comforted and edified by intercourse with our beloved brother, who is about to take his departure from among us, by his holy walk, his conversation, and his ministry. And now, O Lord, lift upon him and upon us the light of Thy countenance; and mercifully continue to bless him with Thy great salvation. Go with him across the great deep. Calm the winds and waves. Multiply Thy consolations upon him, in the midst of the ocean. Return him in safety to his family. Still preserve him, even to a green old age, a light to the church and the world, O heavenly Father, through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.”

Mr. Newton then prayed in the following strain:—“And now, O Father, we are bowed upon our knees, looking unto Thee. Grant unto us Thy grace, mercy, and truth, in Christ Jesus. We thank Thee that we have been brought together. Our hearts have been comforted, and our spirits refreshed. We have looked upon each other's faces, and have been made glad. Continue, O Lord, Thy great and abounding mercy to this Thy church. Strengthen its Ministers by Thy presence and Spirit; and may Thy pleasure prosper still more abundantly in their hands.

And now we must separate. O merciful God, sustain us, preserve us, guide us, comfort us. May we all abide faithful to our trusts, obedient to Thy will, serve Thee humbly, and finally attain eternal life in Christ Jesus. Amen."

Mr. Newton then bade the Bishops farewell, shaking each of them by the hand. The members of the Conference pressed round him as he retired. The scene was solemn and affecting, and few were able to place their feelings under restraint. Many of the Ministers wept much.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. NEWTON took leave of the Conference on the 29th of May, and left Baltimore the next morning for New-York, where he arrived at midnight,—a distance of two hundred miles. Here he found that labours of undiminished magnitude awaited him; his former services in that city and neighbourhood, and the report of his doings elsewhere, having excited general attention, and stimulated the curiosity of some, and the pious feeling of others; so that the desire to hear him was strong, and all but universal, especially among religious people.

The day after his arrival, being the Sabbath, he was appointed to preach at eleven o'clock in the John-street church, where Methodist preaching was commenced in America about seventy-two years before. The crowd was immense, and far more went away than could find entrance. After the service he was invited by Colonel Ross, the Commander of the Forces, to preach to his officers and men; but the engagements which he had already made rendered it impossible that he should accept the offer. In the evening, when he went to the church in Seventh-street, he found it full of people, and about six thousand standing in the street. He therefore ascended some lofty steps, and preached in the open air, on Rom. viii. 32; and then, having dismissed the assembly, he went into the church, and preached to the crowded congregation, who had been waiting all this time, on Rom. xii. 12, and made a collection for the Missions. He concluded the labours of the day

about ten o'clock at night. The heat was intense, the thermometer standing at eighty-four in the shade.

The next morning he left New-York, for the purpose of visiting New-Haven, Middletown, Hartford, Springfield, Boston, and Providence; and having preached at each of these places with his wonted power, interest, and acceptance, he returned to New-York, where he arrived at sunrise on Saturday, June 6th. At four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, he laid the foundation-stone of a new church in Bedford-street,—his name being inscribed upon a piece of white marble, which was to be placed in the building,—and preached to an immense assembly, on Psalm xxvi. 8: “Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.”

In the morning of the next day he went to the village of Williamsburgh to open a new church, multitudes of people from New-York accompanying him. The rain was very heavy, and had been falling from an early hour; yet about five thousand people assembled in and around the building; and more than a hundred vehicles of every description were exhibited in the vicinity. After the service a gold medal was presented to the Preacher, as a mark of respect from the congregation, and a beautiful album for Mrs. Newton.

In the evening he returned to New-York, and preached in the Vestry-street church, where a similar scene occurred, multitudes being disappointed. The Governor of the State of New-York, the Chancellor, and three or four of their friends, entered into the church through a window near the pulpit, being determined to hear the popular stranger.

This was intended to be his last public service in

America; but as the ship which was to convey him to England was not to sail before eleven o'clock the next day, the friends urged him to preach in Allan-street church the next morning at six o'clock. To this he assented; but the persons who accompanied him to the place could not obtain admission, the church having been filled more than an hour before the appointed time. It was observed that such was the eagerness of the people to hear, that when they came within sight of the church, they actually ran, like passengers by a railway or a steam-boat, when they hear the bell ring, as the signal for starting. The text from which he preached his farewell sermon was Phil. iv. 6: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." He spoke with his usual freedom and impressiveness; and his sermon, taken down in short-hand, was forthwith published in a pamphlet, with an account of the entire service.

Before the congregation retired, the following Resolutions were proposed by friends who were present from various places:—"Whereas, our esteemed brother, the Rev. Robert Newton, Representative of the Wesleyan Methodists in Great Britain to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, after a brief and most welcome visit to our shores in his official capacity, is about to sail this day on his voyage to England: therefore,

"Resolved,—That we have hailed his arrival among us with the most heartfelt joy and gratitude, as it is at once the proof and pledge of that affectionate union which has ever existed between the members of the great Methodist family in our own and other lands, which we pray may be perpetuated to the latest generation.

“That the Rev. Robert Newton, by his public and private labours among us in various parts of our country, has greatly endeared himself to the Church, and is entitled to our highest affection and gratitude; and that, in returning to his family and friends, in his native land, he bears with him our warmest wishes and most fervent prayers for his safety, prosperity, and happiness, in this life, and for evermore.

“That in token of our united esteem and regard for our distinguished friend and brother, this congregation will now rise upon their feet, while, in the name and on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, the Rev. Dr. Bangs shall bid him a spontaneous and affectionate farewell.”

As soon as these Resolutions were read, the entire assembly rose, and adopted them; and Dr. Bangs, addressing Mr. Newton, said:—

“My Reverend Brother, it is with great pleasure that I address you in behalf of this numerous congregation, and repeat the assurances of esteem and Christian affection which are contained in the Resolutions just read, and in which the tens of thousands of our brethren and friends who have enjoyed your society, and listened to your ministrations in various parts of our country, will most heartily unite.

“On this your welcome visit to our country, you have come among us, not as a stranger; though it is for the first time that we have been permitted to look upon your countenance. Your name has long been known to us as that of a venerated Minister of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the great Wesleyan family; and your fame, as being in labours and successes more abundant, had led us to

anticipate both pleasure and edification from your ministry. Many of us, however, have been most gratefully disappointed, by reason of the erroneous expectations we had indulged in relation to the character of your public ministry ; having supposed that one chief excellence and attraction at home might depend upon the adornments of modern oratory. It has been our happiness to discover that we were mistaken in attributing your fame to the cultivation of the refinements of the art of elocution : for notwithstanding that you do come to us with excellency of speech, yet we are constrained most to admire the simplicity of the Gospel you preach, the purity of your doctrine, and the Divine eloquence with which you inculcate the fundamental articles of the Christian faith and practice. Especially are we rejoiced to hear from your lips the fervid and eloquent inculcation of the distinctive peculiarities of Wesleyan theology ; the old Gospel-truths of justification by faith, the witness of the Spirit, and entire sanctification of heart and life, as the purchased privilege and gracious possession of the people of God.

“ Moreover, we regard your visit as tending to unite still closer in the bonds of Christian union the entire family of the Wesleyan Methodists in Europe and America, and also to prompt us, if we may not rival you, at least to imitate you in every good word and work. We rejoice in the genuine philanthropy and Christian benevolence which have led you forth in the Bible, Tract, and Missionary cause, and, under the Divine blessing upon British Methodism, enabled you to accomplish so much that your praise is in all the churches. While we participate with you in these labours of love, we bid you God speed. Go on, in the name of the Lord ; and while you travel eastward

with the word of life, spreading the savour of the Redeemer's name, we will journey westward, bearing the same precious seed; and, still advancing onward with the Missionary work, we hope to meet, having circumscribed the globe, upon some favoured spot, where we can unite our common rejoicings in songs of victory and triumph, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

“And now that you are about to leave our shores for your own native land, in the name and in behalf of this congregation, of the General Conference, and, if I be not assuming, I would add, in behalf of the whole Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, I bid you an affectionate farewell. And may the God of providence and grace preserve you amid the perils of the ocean, and restore you to your family, to your friends, and to the Church whose honoured Representative you are, in peace and safety! Bear with you the assurance of our grateful and affectionate remembrance, and that our prayers will accompany and follow you, that you may long continue to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God; and, having served your generation according to the will of God, may we together hail you with the ransomed of the Lord who have gone before us, and sit down together in our Father's house, to go out no more for ever! Farewell, my brother,—for I may call you by that endearing name,—and may the God of peace delight to dwell with and bless you, through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

The benediction was then pronounced, the choir sang a parting hymn, and the assembly separated dissolved in tears. Multitudes wept aloud, and three or four hundred

people shook hands with the Preacher whose voice they were never more to hear.

Several persons came to take leave of him by the water-side, and others went with him on board the steam-vessel which was to convey him to the ship; some of whom had come two hundred miles to show him these last marks of respect. When Mr. Newton and his companion were on board the ship, the American friends standing upon the deck of the steamer alongside pulled off their hats, and united to sing the following hymn:—

“ And let our bodies part,
 To different climes repair,
 Inseparably join'd in heart
 The friends of Jesus are.
 Jesus, the Corner-stone,
 Did first our hearts unite;
 And still He keeps our spirits one,
 Who walk with Him in white.

“ O let us still proceed
 In Jesu's work below;
 And, following our triumphant Head,
 To farther conquests go!
 The vineyard of their Lord
 Before His labourers lies;
 And, lo! we see the vast reward
 Which waits us in the skies.

“ O let our heart and mind
 Continually ascend,
 That haven of repose to find
 Where all our labours end;
 Where all our toils are o'er,
 Our suffering and our pain:
 Who meet on that eternal shore,
 Shall never part again.

“O happy, happy place,
 Where saints and angels meet!
 There we shall see each other's face,
 And all our brethren greet.
 The Church of the first-born,
 We shall with them be blest,
 And, crown'd with endless joy, return
 To our eternal rest.

“With joy we shall behold,
 In yonder blest abode,
 The Patriarchs and Prophets old,
 And all the saints of God.
 Abraham and Isaac there,
 And Jacob, shall receive
 The followers of their faith and prayer,
 Who now in bodies live.

“We shall our time beneath
 Live out in cheerful hope,
 And fearless pass the vale of death,
 And gain the mountain-top.
 To gather home His own,
 God shall His angels send,
 And bid our bliss, on earth begun,
 In deathless triumph end.”

While the friends sang these beautiful and appropriate stanzas, Mr. Newton stood motionless, with his head uncovered, the tears trembling in his eyes. “I took off my hat,” says he: “the scene was most touching. At last the steamer turned round, and they continued waving handkerchiefs and hats till they were out of sight. Lord, grant us a happy meeting in heaven!” The passengers stared at this unusual sight, and wondered what it meant.

Such was the reception that Mr. Newton met with in

America, and such the respect which his talents, labours, and character commanded. During the six weeks and two days that he spent upon that vast continent, he travelled about two thousand miles, and preached or spoke at public meetings nearly one hundred times, and that with undiminished interest and effect; producing in every place an impression of personal sanctity, and of extraordinary power as a public speaker. Since the time of Whitefield no Minister had been a means of producing such effects. The best of all is, that he left behind him not admirers only, but converts; persons who were actually turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," by his instrumentality. It was observed at that time, that some of the Ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church had, in various degrees, departed from the simple earnestness of their fathers, and affected a style of preaching which was speculative and philosophical; and not a few members of the Church, lamenting this fact, anticipated great benefit from Mr. Newton's example. His ministry commanded universal admiration; and yet it was eminently plain, energetic, and scriptural.

When returning to England, he was not accompanied by so many people as were in the ship that conveyed him to America. The emigrants were wanting; but among the cabin-passengers he found a considerable variety, consisting of English, Spanish, Swiss, Dutch, Irish, and Americans. With these people he was accustomed to pray every morning and evening; and he ministered to them the word of life every Sabbath-day during the voyage. His spirit and bearing were so kind and gentlemanly, that he became a general favourite among his fellow-voyagers, some of whom said that, if it were

in their power in future life, they would be regular attendants on his ministry.

On his voyage home a sad accident occurred. A sailor fell overboard, in consequence of the breaking of a rope; and, as the ship was sailing at a rapid speed, it was impossible to save him. He cried for help, and ropes were thrown out to him; but he failed to lay hold upon them. Being a good swimmer, he was seen for some time, as he rose to the top of the waves; but at length he sank to rise no more, till the sea shall resign her dead at the command of the Almighty Son of God. This event furnished an occasion to Mr. Newton to speak to the seamen, and to all on board, on the subject of a preparation for death and eternity; and he availed himself of it with kindness and fidelity, and it may be hoped not without effect. In one of his sermons he referred to the case of the lost sailor, when the tears rolled plentifully down the cheeks of the honest tars on board. Several of the passengers, too, both on this and other occasions, showed signs of deep emotion.

An incident occurred in connexion with this calamity which places the kind thoughtfulness of Mr. Newton in a striking light. His friend Mr. Souter was liable to rise and walk about in his sleep, especially when greatly excited; and once, when on ship-board, in imminent danger of losing his life in consequence of this propensity. Having seen the sailor perish, Mr. Souter was afraid lest, in the course of the following night, he should rise up and plunge himself into the sea, under an apprehension that he could save the life of the drowning man, and therefore deemed it necessary to keep awake. At an early hour the next morning Mr. Newton heard him moving in

his berth, and inquired if he was ill; and on being informed what was the reason of his friend's restlessness, he replied: "You need not be afraid; for having heard of your freaks of somnambulism, I locked the door of your berth, and put the key in my pocket. You may therefore fall asleep as soon as you please; for you are a close prisoner, and cannot escape."

On the 1st of July our voyagers landed at Liverpool, having travelled nearly ten thousand miles, by land and by water, from the 1st of April, when they embarked at the same port. The storm during the preceding night was tremendous; so that their entrance into the quiet harbour was doubly welcome. Mr. Newton says, in his journal: "He who holds the winds in His fists rebuked them and the waves, and we got safe round the Black Rock. I soon recognised several friends on the pier. At last I saw my beloved wife with dear B. and J. It was quite as much as my fortitude could sustain. Mr. P. soon got on board. *I am now on English ground once more. HALLELUIA!*"

After spending a few days with his family in Leeds, preaching in that town and neighbourhood, Mr. Newton repaired to Newcastle, where the Conference was to be held, lending assistance at the opening of the Centenary chapel in York on his way. His appearance among his brethren again, in vigorous health, produced a feeling of general joy; and many and hearty were the congratulations which he received, both from Ministers and laymen, on his safe return to his fatherland.

When the Conference assembled, he received another substantial proof of the confidence and respect in which he was held by his brethren, in his third elevation to the

Presidential Chair. His election in this instance, as well as in the last, took place as early as possible; the lapse of eight years being required by rule before a President can be re-elected to that honourable post. After this matter was determined, he addressed the following characteristic letter to his daughters, in which it is observable he does not call upon them to rejoice in the honours that were so freely conferred upon their father, but to pray that he might be qualified for the momentous duties which, during the next twelve months, he would be called to discharge.

“Yesterday,” says he, “the Conference commenced its solemn and important doings. After the usual preliminary arrangements, the President was elected by the largest majority that was ever known in such a case; the votes for him being one hundred and ninety; and his nomination to the legal hundred for their approval was unanimously confirmed. The person thus elected is your father. I am sure you will present your prayers to the God of all grace, that He may afford all needful support. The office is one of the most grave and weighty responsibility. Dr. Hannah is the Secretary, and Mr. Bowers is appointed to take the place of poor Mr. Anderson. The Ex-President, Mr. Lessey, cannot attend the Conference, in consequence of ill health. A touching letter was received from him yesterday.

“The prayer-meetings in connexion with the opening of the Conference were numerously attended, and marked by special influence from above. I earnestly hope that we shall have a happy Conference. We have ascertained an increase of sixteen thousand members in our Societies in the course of the last year. To God’s name be all the

praise! I believe that I shall remain in Leeds. The Lord direct our way!"

At a later period of the Conference he wrote thus to Mrs. Newton:—"You would have heard from me sooner, if I had not been constantly occupied in the onerous duties of the awful station I have been called to occupy. I am thankful to say, the four great services which I have had to conduct closed last night, when Dr. Hannah delivered the charge to the young men. On the former evening I ordained by solemn imposition of hands, assisted by Elders, fifty-four young Ministers. We had an immense concourse of people, and a most interesting service. The gracious Lord has greatly helped me. I never saw the Conference so respectful, and easy to be governed.

"It is now decided that we shall remain in Leeds. Mr. Pennington will be my young man.

"I had the honour of introducing two Ashantee Princes to the Conference last week, and also dined with them. Freeman is here, as dark as Fraser. Two or three Missionaries return with him to Africa.

"Our increase, at home and abroad, turns out to be upwards of twenty-two thousand. To God be the praise!

"The brethren are coming in, and I must conclude. I stole these moments from the time which is allowed for breakfast. With love to all friends, and their father's love to all at home, at Liverpool, and at Easingwold, when you write. God bless you all!"

When the result of his mission to America was reported to the Conference, the following Resolutions were adopted by that body with great cordiality:—

"The Conference records its affectionate and grateful obligations to the President, the Rev. Robert Newton, for

the promptitude with which, at the sacrifice of much personal and domestic comfort, he consented to undertake a mission, as our Representative, to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

“The Conference most cordially and unanimously expresses its high sense of the Christian spirit which its honoured Representative maintained in every part of his arduous service; of the unwearied zeal and diligence with which he ‘laboured’ among our American brethren ‘in the word and doctrine;’ and of the fidelity which he uniformly observed, especially in his unflinching reiteration and avowal of our unaltered and unalterable views and sentiments on the subject of slavery.

“The Conference offers its united thanksgivings to Almighty God for His gracious preservation of our beloved Representative both by sea and land; for the eminent assistance which He granted to him in his various ministrations abroad; and for the unabated health and vigour in which He has restored him to his family and to us; and to those thanksgivings the Conference adds its fervent prayers, that God may still guard and bless His servant through many future years of usefulness and peace.”

When the business of the Conference was ended, Mr. Newton returned to his Circuit at Leeds; and, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his cares and engagements as President, he resumed, without delay, the kind of service in which for many years he had been employed. During the months of autumn and winter he travelled far and wide, visiting the places that needed his aid, and serving at once the interests of Missions, of local charities, and of Christian godliness; for his preaching and conversation,

wherever he went, were invariably directed to the spiritual good of the people.

Early in the spring he went into Cornwall on a Missionary deputation, where he addressed large congregations, who in pious zeal and liberality seemed determined to surpass their former doings; thence he went to London, to assist at the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; then to South Wales, to attend the yearly meeting of the Ministers belonging to that District. He next went to Cork, as the President of the Irish Conference; after which the English Conference required his presence and services. In all these engagements he was the same cheerful, active, self-denying Minister of the Lord Jesus that he had been for many years; as will be seen in the following brief extracts from the letters which he sent to Mrs. Newton. They describe the nature and extent of his services, and the spirit of piety and holy zeal which he invariably maintained.

“Liskeard, April 2d, 1841.—Here I am, thank God, in safety and health. Yesterday, after a long journey, I attended two Missionary Meetings at Devonport, one in the Town-Hall, and the other in the chapel. Admiral Sir James Hillier took the chair. He is an eminently devout man. On Tuesday I preached three times; twice at Sampford-Peverel, and once at Tiverton. Thus far I have had every needful blessing. The new chapel here this morning has been filled. The collection was forty pounds. We have just come from the Town-Hall, where two or three hundred persons have dined. Many have come from far. I preach again in the evening.

“To-morrow I go fifty miles to Camborne, where I begin my deputation-work. The people, I find, are

expecting great things. May they all look to the great Master! and then they will not be disappointed. I deeply feel my responsibility. May the gracious Lord be my helper! Do not be uneasy on my account. The Lord will be my Keeper in going out and coming in.

“We had a good day at Taunton on Tuesday, where I preached two sermons, and delivered a speech of an hour’s length at the tea-meeting.”

“St. Ives, April 9th.—I have been mercifully preserved from harm and sickness. Indeed, I think the more I travel, and the harder I work, the better I am. The prodigious congregations here would astonish you. The people travel ten, fifteen, or twenty miles on foot, or in what they call ‘vans.’ They make me speak twice in every meeting. But truly their zeal and liberality are beyond what can ordinarily be found. Two hundred pounds were given at Penzance; one hundred and three at St. Just; and when the breakfast is over, we shall have two hundred and twenty, or two hundred and thirty, at this little Robin Hood’s Bay.

“I went from St. Just to see the Land’s End. How I wished you and the girls could have been with me!

“It is heart-cheering to see Wesleyan Methodism so healthy here. Indeed, it is the established church, and has conferred incalculable benefits upon the people. I feel very desirous to be useful while on this mission. O for more of the mind which was in Christ Jesus! You will pray for me. The people tell me how well I look; but you and I know how life with us is passing away. The Lord prepare us, and all who are most dear to us, for His heavenly kingdom!”

At the St. Ives Missionary Meeting Mr. Newton was

gratified to find an excellent Clergyman in the chair, who held out the right hand of fellowship to his Wesleyan neighbours, especially as the friends of the Heathen.

“Camborne, April 10th.—We are, thank God, getting on most charmingly. Such efforts for the support of Missions have never before been known in Cornwall, not even when Peter Jones was here. And the best of all is, that the devotional feeling is just what one would desire. The last night’s meeting here was a most happy one. May I return to my family a better man than I was when I left them !”

“Redruth, April 12th.—Yesterday was a day of no common interest. In the morning the chapel at St. Agnes was so overflowing at nine o’clock, that when I arrived, it was proposed that I should go into the adjoining field. I did, however, squeeze through the crowd into the pulpit. In the evening such a scene was exhibited as was scarcely exceeded even in America. I began the service soon after five o’clock. Truly the Lord was with us ! ‘What am I, O Lord God, or what my father’s house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?’ May I obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful !

“I hope to arrive on Saturday night, though I shall have to travel nearly two hundred miles on that day. Give their father’s love to the dear girls and Frank, and accept once more the assurance of the undying love of your ever affectionate husband.”

“London, April 29th.—I thank God, He has helped me. The Centenary Hall was full long before the time announced for Divine service. Hundreds, I am told, went away, unable to gain admission. The Lord was better to me than even my hopes, while I was speaking of

Wesleyan Methodism as a signal work of God. Dr. Bunting read the prayers; Thomas Jackson acted as the clerk; and the venerable Richard Reece closed with a powerful prayer. The collection was £185. 15s. Glory be to God in the highest! I felt, in a way I cannot describe, the importance and responsibility of my situation this morning.

“Yesterday I came from Bickering’s Park.* I spent a pleasant day at Ridgemount on Tuesday last, at the re-opening of a beautiful little chapel.”

“Bristol, May 10th.—We had overflowing congregations yesterday, and collections for Missions larger than on former occasions. This evening I preach in King-street chapel for Missions; and to-morrow morning go early by a steamer to Cardiff, where I preach in the afternoon and evening. Early the next morning I go by railway to Merthyr-Tydvil, where I meet the Welsh brethren.

“We had an admirable meeting in London. The Members of Parliament spoke nobly. Wesleyan Methodism was at no discount. Sir George Rose was on the platform, and would have spoken, but was obliged to leave before he could come on. Lord Hillsborough had engaged to speak, but was suddenly taken ill. The Scotch Divines did us good service. The Very Reverend the Moderator is a most delightful man, about my own age. He and Dr. Candlish dined with us at our select party after the meeting. It was the most religious and edifying occasion of the kind I ever witnessed.

* The residence of the late Samuel Bennett, Esq.,—a noble specimen of an English farmer, and not less so as a Methodist Local Preacher; a man after Mr. Newton’s own heart.

“It was to me affecting yesterday morning, at the Langton-street chapel, to be followed into the vestry by three or four mothers, each of whom had with her three or four children, to shake hands with me, and get my blessing. I thought, ‘These children will tell of this when my bones are gone to dust, and my tongue lies silent in the grave.’ I see the friends everywhere begin to look upon me as one of the fathers in our Ministry: and yet I seem to be of yesterday. Such is our life. O that I were more deeply imbued with the spirit of wisdom, holiness, and love!”

“Cork, June 29th.—Thanks be to God, I am in perfect health, though retiring late, and rising early, day by day. I am treated with Irish hospitality. The last Sabbath was a day to be remembered. I preached in the morning, and Mr. Bowers in the evening. The Patrick-street chapel could not contain the multitudes who came together. Wesleyan Methodism now commands the attention of the public in a way that it never did before. May we feel, as we ought, our high responsibility, and make the best use of the influence which God hath given us!

“I have this evening to conduct the solemn ordination service. Five young men, of great promise, are to be set apart for the Ministry. On the following evening I am to deliver the charge. May the Lord be my helper! Of one thing I am quite sure: I feel more than I ever did in bygone years, that I am acting for eternity; and that I am hastening to that world where ‘life is all retouched again.’

“I am expected in Dublin on the evening of the Sabbath: and there I must remain over Monday to attend the Anniversary of the Hibernian Missionary Society; so

that it must be Wednesday before I can arrive at my 'sweet home.'"

The time of the English Conference was not far distant when this letter was written; and Mr. Newton, having spent six years in Leeds, expected soon to take his departure to some other field of labour. During the last of these years the Rev. Alfred Barrett was one of his colleagues; and has furnished the following sketch, as the result of his own observation:—

"It was my lot to be associated with Mr. Newton, in the Second Leeds Circuit, in the year 1840; the year in which he was chosen, for the third time, President of the Conference. His fine voice was well adapted to roll through the expanse of the large chapel which had lately been built in Oxford-place, and to command the attention, and to affect the hearts, of the vast congregation then worshipping there; while the broad and simple masses of Gospel truth, of which his sermons chiefly consisted, were gratefully estimated by a people, whose vigorous intellect and genial nature gave them more than ordinary sympathy with the Preacher. And yet, though well and universally known, to many of us he was in some respects unknown. We had known the eloquent and fascinating Missionary advocate, the spirit-swaying Preacher, the effective Secretary of the Conference, whose voice was heard, the moment when he uttered a word, above the murmur of all other voices; but not the confiding friend—the exemplary private companion—the humble believer, breathing after God. Such, however, we found him. When among his brethren, there was, notwithstanding his high official position, no assumption, no *hauteur*. He expressed himself in no other tone than that of a brother among brethren; though he never

suffered the claims of his office to be slighted. When occasionally found in parties of Christian friends, he was ordinarily simple rather than brilliant in his conversation; and more disposed to divert attention from himself than to court it. To detraction and evil-speaking he had a profound aversion; and never did I see that sin so frowned upon, as by his example and gesture, when it was forced upon his notice.

“At the time I refer to, his week-day labours through the country were so connected and continuous, that we hardly ever saw him except on the Sabbath, and the two extremes of the week. He generally arrived at home on the Friday evening, so as to secure the Saturday as a day of retirement. His house was situate in the village of Burley, about two miles from the town; and in order that their residence in that place might be productive of spiritual good to the villagers, Mr. and Mrs. Newton arranged that one of their rooms should be occupied every Friday evening by a regular service, conducted according to the appointed order by the Ministers of the Circuit. With great alacrity and joy the members of the family used to address themselves to the removal of the furniture and the introduction of the forms and pulpit at the usual hour, and in the interval took the warmest interest in the gathering and increase of the little congregation. This devout zeal was abundantly rewarded; for several persons were led in that year to seek and obtain the great salvation of the Gospel, and join the Society which through this instrumentality had been formed.

“On some occasions it happened that he arrived at home to be present at this service; and unless some extraordinary hinderance kept him in private, he never failed to enter the

room, take some quiet corner, join in the hymn, respond reverently to the prayer, and listen to the sermon, though preached by the least experienced of his colleagues, with all the simplicity and freshness of one who was just beginning to understand what the joys and privileges of the worship of God really are.

“Once, in the absence of Mr. Cusworth, it fell to his lot to preside at the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit. It was found, in the course of the proceedings, that, although the congregations were not diminished during the preceding months, the numbers in the Societies had declined, and the classes were in a somewhat drooping state. This led him to address some observations to the Preachers and office-bearers then present, which were partly encouraging and partly admonitory. He adverted to the great design of all church-organization and all preaching; and said how dissatisfied and unhappy he ever felt himself, if all the purposes of the Gospel were not fulfilled, and if edification and increase did not go on together. He was then led to speak of his own ministry; and said that, though he had to bewail in confusion and shame before God his manifold unfaithfulness, he was thankful that he had been able to maintain a steadfast determination, in all the popularity with which it had pleased God to favour him, so to preach as to aim directly at the salvation of his hearers. As he grew older, he said, he saw the vanity of all other kinds of preaching, and felt resolved to abide by the old order; and called upon all present to do the same. In the whole of this address there was a tenderness, unction, and solemnity, proceeding from the state of his own heart at the time, which can never be put into words; but it speedily awoke sympathy in others. Similar confessions

were made; similar convictions were uttered; then the tenderness and solemnity spread, as if by a special illapse of the Divine Spirit; and when two or three at the close arose to speak, they were hindered by their feelings, and the room where they were assembled became a place of weeping. The late Mr. Christopher Dove, who was then present, was wont afterwards to speak of that day with loving memory. It was a day not easy for any one to forget.

“I may add, that it was by Mr. Newton’s solicitation and fatherly patronage, that I began in Leeds a weekly Bible-class, for the edification and instruction of young people,—a labour which has yielded much gracious fruit, and which I have never relinquished from that day.”

The Conference of 1841 was held in Manchester; and during the early part of its sittings some duties of great weight and importance devolved upon him, in consequence of the office of President which he had sustained for the last twelve months. Writing therefore to Mrs. Newton, he says: “When I get over the sermon to the Conference on Monday, and the charge to the newly-ordained men on Thursday, I shall be very thankful to Him ‘whose I am, and whom I serve.’”

“You will be glad to hear that the Committee of the Centenary Fund has adjudged a larger sum to the Missionary cause. Miss Birch has presented a thousand pounds for the support of the Ashantee Mission, and sixty for the Irish schools. May God bless her! Mr. Sutcliffe, who resides with us, is treated with great respect.”

“Manchester, August 6th.—I have now discharged the weighty duties for which I was responsible to the Conference, by preaching the official sermon, and delivering the

charge, which took place last evening. Truly the Lord was better to me than my apprehensions. The Oldham-street chapel was crowded to overflowing. I am urged to print; and now feel myself much more buoyant than before.

“Poor Mr. Sutcliffe had to leave the Conference, having heard that his wife was very ill. She died before he reached home. He has written a touching letter to Mrs. Johnson, in which he says: ‘I found her cold, and gone over the brook; and, O, I am left behind, a poor tottering old man!’ What a mercy it is, that you and I are spared to each other! The respect and affection of my brethren are overwhelming.”

CHAPTER XII.

ON the 1st of September, 1841, Mr. Newton took leave of his friends in Leeds, and removed with his family to Cheetham-Hill, in the First Manchester Circuit. The separation was an occasion of mutual sorrow. With many of them he was very intimate, and he highly esteemed them for their piety and uprightness, as well as for the countenance and aid which they had afforded him in the exercise of his ministry during the last six years. His week-day services had, indeed, been widely distributed; but his Sabbaths had been given to the town and neighbourhood of Leeds, where his preaching was made a blessing to thousands. From this time, though he and his friends in Leeds were locally separated, they continued one in mind and heart.

Among many other persons who came to take leave of him before his removal was a devout woman, somewhat advanced in life, who expressed her regret at his departure, and thanked him for the ministry which it had been her privilege to attend; observing, at the same time, that his preaching was characterized by two peculiarities, which she regarded as of the highest importance. "You speak," said she, "with such clearness, and in such an elevated tone of voice, that I hear every word you utter; and your sermons are so plain, that I can understand and remember them better than the sermons of any other man." "I thank you very sincerely for your good opinion," was his reply: "you have paid me the highest compliment I ever received."

During the next six years his family resided in Manchester, or its immediate vicinity, spending one-half of this period in the Manchester First Circuit, and the other half in Manchester Second. The Conference still, in compliance with the expressed desire of the Connexion, appointed a junior Minister to preach in his places on the week-nights, and discharge the duty of pastoral visitation; thus enabling Mr. Newton to pursue the course of public labour which to him had become matter of confirmed habit. He served his own Circuit with strict punctuality on the Lord's day; but on the other days of the week he was the willing servant of the entire Methodist body. The Circuits to which he was appointed received him with this understanding; yet they attached so much importance and value to his Sunday labours, that they were even eager to obtain his services upon these terms. As the Rev. James Dixon, the President of the Conference, was then stationed in Manchester, he, of course, was the Chairman of the District; so that Mr. Newton was in this respect more at liberty to visit distant places than he had been for several years.

When he had spent twelve months in faithfully ministering the word of life in the First Manchester Circuit, and in uninterrupted journeyings to serve the English and Irish Connexions, he repaired to London, to attend the Annual Conference. Dr. Hannah was elected the President, and Mr. Newton was again appointed to officiate as the Secretary. To him this Conference was an occasion of the highest interest, Bishop Soule having been sent as the Representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America to their brethren in England, accompanied by the Rev. Thomas Sargent. Mr. Newton had

formed a high opinion of the Bishop, from what he had seen of him in the United States, and suggested that he should be selected for this service. He was delighted to see him, and promised himself much happiness in his intercourse with that gifted man, as well as with his English brethren generally.

Yet scarcely had the Conference assembled, and he had entered upon his duties as Secretary, than he found himself placed in circumstances of trial, which he had not anticipated, and which placed his fine character in a new and impressive light. He had passed through a course of extraordinary popularity with singular modesty and self-abasement; and he had endured the bitterest peltings of defamation and reproach with unruffled meekness and charity; but it was yet to be seen how he could endure the sorrows of bereavement. He was eminently distinguished by the tenderness of his domestic affections. His heart yearned over his children, and he cherished a deep solicitude for their welfare. Amidst the most urgent and pressing of his public engagements, he never forgot his children, and never ceased to commend them to the mercy of God in earnest prayer. This is attested by every part of his correspondence with Mrs. Newton when he was from home; and his return to them every Saturday, after the exciting services and extensive journeyings of the week, always afforded him a sincere gratification. As in the case of the Patriarch Jacob, his life was bound up in the lives of his children; and nothing but a deep conviction of duty could have induced him to spend so much of his time from their society. As a father, it was to him matter of thankfulness, that, with the exception of an infant who died in the birth, he

had never been required to follow the remains of any of his own children to the grave. But a sacrifice of this kind was now required at his hands.

He had been absent from home about ten days, attending the Committees which meet preparatory to the assembling of the Conference, and in visiting his friends at Derby. During this interval his daughter Mary Anne was seized with fever; and the letters which he received from Mrs. Newton contained intimations that serious consequences were apprehended. In the evening of the first day of the Conference he wrote the following letter to his anxious wife:—

“I cannot tell you with what sensations I received the information yesterday, by your two notes, of the serious illness of dear Mary Anne. Your letter, which has been forwarded to me from Derby, has somewhat relieved me. I had returned from Derby to London without the slightest idea of what had taken place. Dear girl! I never knew before how well I loved her; nor have I ceased to pray for her, and you all, since I learned her state. I earnestly hope, however, that by this time she is better; and if so, the quieter she is, the better. Had the information reached me at Derby, I should have gone forward to see you, if I had travelled all night. I need not tell you to write every day, till you think the fever has abated. She has the best medical assistance; and I believe our gracious Lord does and will hear prayer in her behalf. O that this visitation may be sanctified to us all! The fortitude which is expressed in your letter is such as true religion only could inspire.

“The Conference commenced this morning. Dr. Hannah is the President, and your old husband is once more

the Secretary ; so that you can suppose I am busy enough. I have sent back-word to Mr. Farmer, who has a large party this evening ; partly because I am not in spirits for company, and partly that I might have time to write this letter.

“Tell Mary that I constantly pray for her ; that I believe God will raise her up from the bed of sickness ; and that she will have to say, ‘It was good for me that I was afflicted.’ How intensely I long to hear from you again ! May God bless and sustain my beloved wife ! and may the God of our mercies undertake for us, and be a very present help in time of need !”

The mind of Mr. Newton was not kept long in this state of trembling suspense respecting his beloved daughter. The fever assumed the form of typhus, and so soon completed its ravages, that her spirit had fled when he sat down to write this letter. In the course of a few brief hours intelligence of her departure was communicated to his friend Dr. Bunting, with a request that the sad fact might be made known to the anxious father in a manner that would be the least likely to shock his feelings. It was deemed advisable that a few of the senior Ministers, with whom he had long been acquainted, should ask him to leave his desk in the Conference, and retire with them into the vestry of the City-road chapel ; and there the fact was disclosed to him. The writer of this narrative was present, and witnessed the affecting scene. The manly countenance of the bereaved father fell ; the tears started into his eyes ; and his first utterance was a devout acknowledgment of the hand of God in the event, and of meek submission to His will. To say that—

“He thought as a sage, while he felt as a man,”

would convey a very imperfect conception of his character in this sad emergency. He "felt" as a tender father, who was bereaved of a beloved child; and he "thought" as a man who was accustomed to see and confess the hand of God in every event; and his entire demeanour presented a perfect comment upon the words of the inspired Psalmist: "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because THOU didst it."

He immediately left the Conference, and hastened to his home, which had now become a "house of mourning." He wept with the other members of his family; and while he comforted them, he obtained consolation himself. In his small interleaved almanack, he briefly notes the day in which his "dear Mary Anne went to heaven;" adding the prayer, "O God, sanctify this stroke!" and the touching memorandum, "My dear Mary Anne's mortal remains were entombed in sure and certain hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ."

These references to the endless happiness of the deceased were not the mere dictates of a fatherly affection. For seven years she had known the Lord as the God of her salvation, having sought and found redemption through the sacrificial blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and been a blameless and upright member of the Connexion in which her father was a Minister. Her mental endowments were of a high order, and her disposition amiable and obliging; so that she was a great favourite in the family, and her removal was felt to be no common loss. She had attained to the age of twenty-seven years, and had given ample proof of her religious and moral worth. Her spirit was eminently catholic; and she had a deep conviction of the importance of mutual confidence, esteem, and

affection among the various denominations of professed Christians.

After the funeral, Mr. Newton went to Edgworth, near Bolton, in Lancashire, the residence of his daughter Rebecca, where he preached twice, in a state of high and holy excitement, feeling a special nearness to the spiritual and eternal world, into which one who was so tenderly allied to him had just entered. Then, after the lapse of a day or two, he returned to London, as he expresses it, "to enter on my duties and toils;" adding, "May I be a holier man, and a better Minister of Jesus Christ!" On his return to the Conference he addressed the following letter to Mrs. Newton:—

"I arrived here in safety the last evening. Dr. Bunting was waiting for me at Mr. Perkins's. His welcome was most affectionate and brotherly. My reception this morning by the Conference was beyond what language can express. What am I, O Lord God, or what my father's house, that I should have such an interest, and my family such an interest, in the sympathies and prayers of so many of the Ministers of Jesus Christ? I need not tell you what were my reflections generally on the railway.

"This day, at noon, Dr. Steinkopff, and Dr. Sydow, Chaplain to the King of Prussia, were introduced to the Conference. Their speeches were marked by piety, simplicity, and brotherly affection. Wesleyan Methodism is evidently exerting a very salutary influence in Germany. O, I thought, if dear Mary Anne could have been present, to hear the expressions which were uttered on the subject of unity and brotherly love, and its importance among the different sections of the Christian church, how would it

have gladdened her heart! But no: she is immoveably fixed in a world of light and love.

“Last evening fifty-two young men were set apart by the imposition of hands. It was a solemn occasion. Dr. Sydow returned to the evening service. He was greatly affected, and took notes of what passed. He had displeased the King by a sermon on spiritual religion. He sent a defence of it to His Majesty, by which he was so impressed that he desired to hear the Doctor again on the same subject; after which he invited the Doctor to dine with him. Several of Mr. Wesley’s sermons have been translated into German. A great deal more on the same subjects you may expect to hear when I see you.”

A few days after Mr. Newton had returned to the Conference, he sustained the loss of one of his grandchildren, the lovely son of his daughter Caroline, the wife of Mr. Gill, attorney, at Easingwold; to whom he addressed the following Christian letter:—

“MY DEAR ROBERT AND CAROLINE,—

“I HAVE just received from my dear wife the information that dear Bailey is also gone to a better world. How seldom does one breach of the kind come alone! Little did dear Mary Anne and Bailey think, when they parted at Easingwold so lately, that they so soon should meet in heaven. I rejoice to hear that the child had such thoughts and feelings respecting sin, and the salvation of Jesus Christ. Doubtless it was the abundant grace in Christ Jesus that was preparing him for the inheritance of the saints in light. We and you must bow down to the will of God. He does all things well; and what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. May the great

end be answered! May we all become more holy and useful!

“I have resumed my arduous duties here, amid the kind sympathies and prayers of my brethren.

“Of dear Mary Anne’s everlasting happiness I have not the shadow of a doubt. She is for ever safe and happy.

“I think if Caroline, or you both, could spare a few days to visit us or Liverpool, it would be for your good every way.

“Mr. Rattenbury preached for me in the City-road chapel last night, to an overflowing congregation. His text was, ‘And so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ It was a time to be remembered.

“I tried to preach yesterday week at Edgworth, where dear Rebecca is, beyond Bolton. I went there to try to console her. I was raised above all earthly considerations. Never did I see a congregation so much affected. How little is this world! How unspeakably valuable is religion! God bless and comfort you both!”

Two days later he thus addressed Mrs. Newton:—“I have just received your very welcome letter, informing me of your safe arrival at Edgworth, where I know you will be refreshed in body and mind; and you will rejoice with me to find dear Rebecca so graciously supported; and that our dear Caroline is so raised above all earthly things, and has such strong consolation, is a loud call on our gratitude to God. I have now a sweetness in reflecting on the life, death, and present glorious and happy state of our dear Mary Anne. I can say, and you can say, ‘Father, Thy will be done.’ I, you, and all our family, have been and are prayed for by the Conference. May we duly estimate

the value of this privilege! I wrote to Robert and Caroline on the receipt of your former letter. May God, for Christ's sake, sanctify to them and us all the recent dispensations of His providence towards us! Surely we shall all derive some real benefit from what has taken place; think less of earth, and more of heaven.

"I have had the deep sympathy of Mr. Rattenbury, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Galland, and especially of Mr. Alfred Barrett. He will write to you. Good Bishop Soule expressed his condolence in the most affectionate manner. He commands the respect of all. He is now in the act of delivering his official address to the Conference, and has tendered the sincere and cordial thanks of the whole Methodist Episcopal Church in America for the visit of your husband to that country; adding, that in me they had seen a pure, and he might say a perfect, exhibition of primitive Wesleyan Methodism. Would that it had been much more perfect! It is, however, something to receive the approval and gratitude of four or five thousand Ministers, and nearly one million of church-members. President Durbin and the Rev. J. Sewell (a charming young man) are also with us.

"I have not attempted to preach since I came here. Peter and Rebecca will tell you how I got through at Edgworth.

"I read to the Conference last evening a long address from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to our Conference, greeting us as a part of the holy apostolic church of Christ, and asking our prayers. How astonishing are these things! and how would they have delighted dear Mary Anne! May we obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful!"

When the Conference had concluded its business, Mr. Newton returned to his home at Rose-Bank, Cheetham-Hill; but, as he observes in his small almanack, he felt that "one rose was removed to bloom in paradise." Yet he had no time to spend in melancholy reflections and gloomy solitude. His public services were in universal demand; and instead of wasting his time in unavailing regrets, because of the vacancy which he could not but observe in his family circle, he resumed his gigantic labours, travelling east and west, north and south, with the Gospel message; anxious to fulfil his allotted task of duty, and thus prepare to follow his glorified child to the regions of peace and love. This was the truest respect that he could show to her memory.

"He mourns the dead, who lives as they desire."

During the months of autumn and winter he spent his Sundays in his own Circuit, as usual; and on the week-days he visited Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Middlesex, Berkshire, and Cheshire. In the month of April he visited the Channel Islands; attended the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, in the beginning of May; after which he visited Scotland, met the Irish Preachers at their Conference in Belfast, and then discharged the duties of Secretary at the English Conference, which was held in the town of Sheffield. A few brief selections from his letters addressed to Mrs. Newton, and other members of his family, will show the rapidity of his movements, the efficiency of his ministrations, and the spirit of holy

cheerfulness and zeal with which he passed through his arduous labours:—

“GUERNSEY, *April 15th*, 1843.

“THE providence of God has brought me here in safety, and in perfect health: to Him be the praise! I preached at Walsall in the evening of the day I left you. The next morning, about six o'clock, I set off by the railway for Birmingham; and after waiting there about an hour, I started for the Bromsgrove station; there I was met by a conveyance, which took me to Redditch, where I preached in the morning and evening at the opening of the new chapel. The collection amounted to seventy-three pounds. On the Wednesday morning I rose soon after four o'clock, and went by the railway to Cheltenham; thence by coach to Cirencester; thence by the railway to the Swindon station; and then by the Great Western to Bath, where I preached that night to a crowded congregation. On Thursday, by forced marches, I got to Newbury, where I preached twice; and yesterday came in a gig over the Hampshire hills, covered with snow, arrived at the Andover-road station, in time for a down-train to Southampton, in the suburbs of which I opened a beautiful chapel at a place called Shirley. I preached at eleven o'clock and three, and then took a cup of tea, and went on board the 'Atalanta' steamer for Guernsey. We left Southampton at seven o'clock in the evening, and landed here at a quarter past six this morning,—a distance of one hundred and twenty miles. I am thankful to say I am as good a sailor as ever, not having any tendency to sea-sickness.

“The approach to these islands is beautiful; the hedges and fruit-trees being in broad leaf. The cherry-trees are in full bloom.

“I find that I must work for the French, as well as for the English, while I am here. I am the guest of Mr. Bishop, in a lovely situation, a mile out of the town. One would almost imagine that the curse had not fallen on these islands, or that Paradise is here regained.

“I deeply and humbly feel the responsibility of my deputation here. Such marvellous things have been said of me, that I know not what expectations have been raised. The good Lord be my helper! I know you will pray for me.”

On his arrival in London he thus addressed his daughter Rebecca:—“I cannot tell you what I felt when in Jersey I received a letter from your dear mother, saying that the Lord had taken your sweet babe to Himself. Your husband and you will feel as you never felt before. But we must all remember that what the Lord does is right and good. You know our first child was taken to heaven. Dear Caroline has had the same trial; and we had our dear Mary Anne taken from us in her youthful bloom. These are additional and strong ties to the heavenly world. May we all be ready to follow whenever our Lord shall call! I reflect with pure delight on the fact, that I dedicated your little darling to the Lord in holy baptism; and you will not forget the words of Jesus Christ, ‘Of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ I rejoice that you and Peter bear the stroke with meek submission to the will of God.

“I have been much gratified with the lovely scenery of the islands of Guernsey and Jersey. I have worked hard

both for the English and French. The people showed me no small kindness.

“I was rejoiced to find many of the spiritual children of my brother John in the islands. He travelled there three years.

“I hope we shall have a good meeting at Exeter-Hall. May God bless my dear Rebecca and her husband! and may they have many happy years together!”

To Mrs. Newton he writes from Edinburgh, on his way to Ireland:—“I am yet in this modern Athens, where I preached twice on the Sabbath-day. The chapel was filled, as it is called here, at noon, and crowded in the evening. I am told that we had not only members of the Kirk, but some of the first law-officers and professors. The Ministers of the Free Kirk have offered me a commission for six months, to preach for them through the cities and towns of Scotland. The noble-minded men have given up manse, glebe, stipend, kirk, and the honour of an Establishment, for truth and purity. Surely God will bless them.

“This evening I preach again in the Nicolson-square chapel for Missions. The heads of houses are again expected. The Lord be my helper! O that the favour which my blessed Master is pleased to give me in the eyes of the people, may be sanctified, and improved to His glory and the profit of many!

“I was affected last night at Dalkeith, when a lady came to speak to me in tears, saying, she remembered me well in Ayr, forty years ago. She told some friends who were looking on, that you and I were so happy in each other, and in our God, that we submitted, without a murmuring word, to our homely lodgings. She then introduced one of her daughters, a grown-up young lady. The mother

was only twelve years of age when we were at Ayr. What is our life! We are far on in our momentous journey."

"Edinburgh, June 15th.—Last Monday I preached in our old kirk at Dalkeith in the evening; and in the following evening I preached here to a most interesting congregation. Many of the Ministers of different kirks followed me into the vestry, among whom was the Rev. Mr. Brown, of Dalkeith, saying that Dr. Wardlaw, of Glasgow, had been published to preach one of the fast-day sermons in his kirk; and that he had been suddenly called to London, to preach a funeral sermon on occasion of the death of Dr. Fletcher. And what think you? He and his Elders had agreed that I must be respectfully and earnestly entreated to take Dr. Wardlaw's place. What a change there is in the public sentiment of this country! I went in the name of the Lord, and preached in the full costume of the Scottish Minister, with great freedom, on Luke xxiv. 46, 47. I had to hasten back to the Missionary Meeting here in the evening. Dr. Hannah took the chair; the attendance was large; and two Ministers of the Free Church, Messrs. Begg and Guthrie, attended."

"Dublin, June 20th.—After a safe voyage from Glasgow, I arrived in this city on Saturday afternoon. The President, fatigued, went home from Scotland, and I had to preach for him on Sunday evening. Two hundred pounds was the amount of the collection. We had Members of Parliament and three Judges among our auditors. We had a public breakfast under the splendid new chapel yesterday morning, at which five hundred and nineteen persons were present. I was called to give out the hymn, read the Scriptures, pray, and address the assembly. Tomorrow I am to preach again in the Centenary chapel.

I have been told many of the *litterati* intend to be present. The Lord enable me to be faithful!

“On Thursday morning, at six o’clock, I am to set off by coach for Belfast. I see by the Irish Conference-Plan, that I am appointed to preach to the Conference on Friday evening, and to the people in the morning and evening of Sunday. I ought to have had previous information of the special service; but the Irish brethren seem to think that I am a servant of all work, and am always ready.”

After his arrival in Sheffield, where he attended the meetings of Committees, preparatory to the holding of the English Conference, he again addressed Mrs. Newton: “The meetings of the Committees have been marked with good and pious feeling, and I earnestly hope that we shall have a good Conference. We are likely to have an increase in our Societies, at home and abroad, in nearly equal proportions, of eight thousand members. Blessed be God!

“A steamer has been wrecked; and a young man, from Scotland, who was recommended for our ministry, is among the sufferers. What a gracious and special Providence has preserved your unworthy husband, by sea and land, all these years!

“I feel intensely concerned for Frank. The Lord direct his way! It is now forty-four years since I received orders to leave my father’s house; and in a few weeks it will be forty-one years since we were made one. How many blessings have we received! and if life with us has not been all sunshine, may every bitter blast be sanctified! We have not long to live in this world. May all that are dear to us live together in heaven!”

At the Conference of this year, 1843, which was held under the presidency of the Rev. John Scott, Mr. Newton

was again called to the office of Secretary. He did not at this time appear in a new character, for he was the same cheerful, laborious, and faithful Methodist Preacher that he had been from the commencement of his ministry: the only difference was, that his talents were vastly improved, and his graces greatly mellowed. But from this time he bore a new title; the Wesleyan University of Middletown, in America, having conferred upon him the honourable degree of Doctor of Divinity. In no instance was this distinction ever more justly merited, or more appropriately bestowed.

The term "doctor" was formerly used in England in the sense of "teacher." In the English version of the Holy Scriptures which was published at Rheims, in the year 1582, Ephesians iv. 11 is thus rendered: "And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and othersome Evangelists, and othersome Pastors and DOCTORS." The Greek term *νομοδιδάσκαλοι*, which literally signifies "teachers of the law," or "law-teachers," is, in the Authorized Version of the English Bible, rendered "DOCTORS of the law;" (Luke v. 17;) and Gamaliel, who belonged to this class of persons in the Jewish Church, is denominated "a Doctor of the law." (Acts v. 34.) In one of the Collects which are used in the ordination of Priests in the Church of England, it is said that our Lord Jesus Christ, "after He had made perfect our redemption by His death, and was ascended into heaven, sent abroad into the world His Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, DOCTORS, and Pastors." If the term be understood in this sense, then the title "Doctor of Divinity" could not be more correctly applied to any man than to Robert Newton; for certainly no man, of any age or nation, ever taught divinity upon a more extensive

scale than he. It may be safely said that, for thirty or forty years of his life, he addressed not less than from fifty to one hundred thousand people annually on the great principles of Divine truth.

Equally just is the title "Doctor of Divinity" as applied to him, if the term "doctor" be understood to denote proficiency in the knowledge of divinity; for certainly his acquaintance with that holy science was both accurate and comprehensive, as his diversified and powerful ministry demonstrated. His sermons, from year to year, were a perfect embodiment of the entire system of Christian truth, doctrinally, experimentally, and practically considered, as that truth is generally understood by Protestant communities.

Yet this title, honourable as it is, produced no change either in his spirit, or the public estimation. The multitudes of people that attended his ministry had such a conviction both of his intellectual power and his moral worth, that they would scarcely have thought more highly of him, had all the learned bodies in existence conferred upon him similar marks of distinction. And as to himself, he was to the end of his life the same humble, modest, unassuming, unaffected Minister of Christ, that he had ever been. Like his Lord, he affected not high things, and was intent only upon the fulfilment of his great commission. He had too deep a consciousness of the responsibilities under which he lay, to cherish a spirit of self-conceit; and the name by which he was generally known was that of plain "Robert Newton."

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN the Conference of 1843 was concluded, Dr. Newton immediately resumed the extraordinary course of ministerial labour to which he had long been accustomed; but to trace that course from year to year, in all its details, would be to extend this narrative far beyond the prescribed bounds. Suffice it to say that his willingness to labour was unimpaired, the demand upon his services was as urgent as ever, and his popularity rather increased than diminished. After attending the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, at the beginning of the following May, he visited Bristol; and, under the date of May 6th, 1844, thus addresses Mrs. Newton:—

“The densely-crowded congregations in the City-road and Islington chapels, and the cheering in Exeter-Hall, greatly affected and humbled me. What am I, that my gracious Master is pleased to give me such favour in the sight of His people? May I obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful! Our meeting was more decidedly religious than some former meetings have been.

“My old friend Mrs. Wood is sinking very fast. I question whether I shall ever see her again. *We* are following on; and, if we be spared a few years longer, must sink under the weight of age. The Lord help us all to live for a better world!

“I preach here this evening, and then go to London in the morning. Wednesday, the 8th, is the time at which I am to preach before the London Missionary Society. You will not forget your husband *when* it is the best to be

remembered that morning. I believe the Lord will be with His unworthy servant."

He fulfilled the service to which reference is here made, by preaching, with his usual ability and earnestness, in the Surrey chapel, before a crowded assembly. The subject of his sermon was the nature and extent of the apostolical commission, from Luke xxiv. 46, 47. It afforded him a high gratification to meet the friends of Christ whose views on some points of doctrine and of church-order were different from his own, and thus publicly declare that with respect to the substance of the Gospel, and the duty of Christians to make it known to all nations, he was one with them in mind and heart. An elderly lady in the congregation, who had been taught to regard an "Arminian" as an embodiment of all that is erroneous in opinion and perverse in character, no sooner saw the Doctor ascend the pulpit in Mr. Sherman's gown,—in which his appearance was eminently graceful and noble,—than she showed her readiness to receive more favourable impressions, by exclaiming, "Lo, what a beauty!"

A few weeks afterwards, when he was on his way to Scotland, he attended a Missionary Meeting at Pocklington, where his visits were always welcome, and where a few individuals still remained that remembered him as a youthful Evangelist, who had just left his father's house. He says: "How many recollections were revived! Little did I expect, when I first arrived there, that I should be in the same place again after the lapse of nearly forty-five years."

It was probably on this occasion that a singular incident occurred with respect to an aged man belonging to the Pocklington Circuit, to whom reference has already

been made. John Hart, of Thornton, who was far advanced in life, and very infirm, expressed an earnest desire to be conveyed to Pocklington, that he might once more see and hear Robert Newton, whom he had known, and counselled, and encouraged, as a young Preacher, but who was now a Doctor of Divinity, and one of the most popular public speakers in England. His request was complied with; a conveyance was provided; and, lest he should be incommoded by the crowd in the chapel, he was placed in the pulpit. In the course of his address Dr. Newton referred to the early years of his ministry, and to the fact, that he had once consulted John Hart on the subject of resigning his charge in the Circuit, when John uttered the significant declaration, "YOU DARE NOT." The Doctor then said, "I wonder whether John Hart is alive or not;" and John, who was deeply interested in the statement, responded, with a shrill and tremulous voice, and in his own native idiom, "I is here, Sir." The scene which immediately followed this disclosure, and the feeling which was excited both in the Doctor and the devout peasant, and in the meeting generally, may be more easily conceived than described. Let not "ambition mock" at facts of this kind, nor "grandeur hear" the recital of them "with a disdainful smile." They involve principles which are too deep for even philosophy to fathom. It is possible that the three pithy words, "YOU DARE NOT," were a means in the hand of God of preventing the young Evangelist, in the hour of temptation and discouragement, from leaving his Circuit-work, and from returning to his farming occupations; and if so, then the hundreds of sinners who were turned to righteousness by his preaching in subsequent years, and the tens of thousands of people who were in-

structed and edified by his ministry, owe a debt of gratitude to John Hart which they can never fully repay; and Dr. Newton himself, while through eternity he reaps the fruit of his faithful labours, will bless God for the words which were so seasonably spoken by a plain unlettered man. It is possible that they may be remembered and repeated with thankfulness to God millions of ages hence.

Having paid his annual visit to Scotland, and to the Irish Conference, and in both cases left a blessing behind him, Dr. Newton repaired to the English Conference, which was held this year in Birmingham, under the presidency of his friend Dr. Bunting; and he was again appointed to the laborious office of Secretary. He had now spent three years in the Manchester First Circuit, so that his removal was necessary; and Salford, which was now called the Second Manchester Circuit, was made the place of his next destination. The following extract of a letter which he addressed to Mrs. Newton from the Conference, will show the feelings with which he contemplated his future appointment:—

“I greatly fear that nothing can at present be done for the pecuniary relief of the Salford chapel. It is a terrible case. I hope, however, that our going there may be of the Lord. Let us often pray that our appointment there may be a special blessing to us, and to the people. I cannot have many more stations. May I work while it is day! How little is everything in this world without religion! May this best portion be ours, both in life and death! I am oppressed with invitations for extra service in this town and neighbourhood; but my office is a defence. I cannot be a moment out of the Conference. The evening sitting has commenced, and I must conclude.”

During the three years which he spent in the Salford or Second Manchester Circuit, the Rev. William B. Stephenson was his colleague, as he had formerly been in the Liverpool North Circuit. To him we are indebted for the following interesting particulars respecting the Doctor:—"A person who is no mean judge both of character and preaching often said, after sitting under his ministry for five years, that his sermons were always fresh, and always rich in evangelical truth; so that those persons are greatly mistaken, who suppose that his ministry consisted only of a few favourite and well-studied discourses. His was not a stereotyped ministry; but was varied, rich, and powerful, and always attended by a gracious influence.

"A fact which came under my own observation I will take occasion to relate. It occurred when extraordinary efforts were made to redeem the Irwell-street chapel, in Salford, from its very serious pecuniary difficulties,—an object which was accomplished chiefly through the influence of Dr. Newton. The Trustees and friends, aided by the grant of one thousand pounds from the Chapel Relief Fund, raised no less than six thousand three hundred pounds. Dr. Newton set apart an entire week for the purpose of calling upon families and individuals to assist in this good work; the only week in his ministerial life, as he confessed, in which he freed himself from all pulpit engagements, that he might solicit contributions for such an object. Never can I forget that week. We were pledged to raise a thousand pounds, and every day we began our work soon after six o'clock in the morning; and finished our service at noon on the Saturday, having received the sum of thirteen hundred pounds.

"On one of those days we called upon a family in

comparatively humble life, the heads of which had for many years lived in the fear of God. As soon as we entered into the house, the good woman, fixing her eyes upon Dr. Newton, clasped her hands, and exclaimed, 'Come in, thou man of God! O that such a man should come under my roof!' Still standing in this attitude, as if unable to move, she added, 'O, Dr. Newton, it is a pity that you should ever die!' He answered, 'Well; I trust I never shall; for I have life in Christ, and hope to live for ever.' 'O yes,' said she, being now partly relieved by a flood of tears; 'but I mean it is a pity that you should ever go out of this world.' The sequel will explain the cause of her emotion. 'O, Doctor,' said she, 'it is now more than thirty years since I first heard you preach; and under your ministry I was converted and saved; and this is the first time I ever spoke to you. I thank God that I ever saw you.' The scene was deeply affecting, and the prayer which the Doctor offered up before we left the house was singularly copious and powerful.

"Another incident I will mention. During his residence at Salford, he one day received a letter from an unexpected quarter, containing severe and cruel reflections upon him on account of his fidelity to the Conference, of which he was the Secretary, and to the Methodist discipline and order, which he was pledged to uphold. When he read this letter, which contained unjust reflections upon his motives and character, he was much affected, and could not refrain from tears; saying, 'I did not think that any man could have said this of Robert Newton.' I said to him, 'Surely, after this, Doctor, you will never again visit the place from which

this communication comes?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I shall. For the work in which I am engaged is the work of the Master; and He has never offended me, whatever the servants may have done. However they may speak and act, He is a good Master still.' Such was the spirit of Robert Newton."

About this time he succeeded in defeating an impudent attempt that was made to disturb a Missionary Meeting in the Irwell-street chapel.

A miserable woman, of the name of Mrs. Martin, was going about the country, delivering lectures in favour of what was popularly called "Socialism;" that is, of atheism in theory, and licentiousness in practice. She had come to Manchester, where several of the working-classes, who did not like to retain God in their thoughts, paid the sum of twopence an evening to hear her vile harangues against all religion, and even moral government. To obtain further notoriety, it was arranged that she, accompanied by her ungodly partisans, should attend the Missionary Meeting which, according to public announcement, was to be held in the Methodist chapel, Salford. Accordingly, when the meeting assembled, she and her accomplices took their places together in the gallery. While the business of the meeting was in progress, she arose, and demanded a hearing in opposition, not only to Christianity, but to all religion; when, of course, great confusion prevailed; her friends requiring that she should be heard, and others declaring that she should not.

Mr. Newton, who was on the platform, rose in all the confidence of truth and righteousness, and, in the full force of his trumpet-voice, exclaimed, "And is it come to this?"

Is it come to this? that in this Christian country a company of Christian people cannot meet in one of their own places of worship, which their own hands have reared, for the purpose of devising means for sending the Gospel to the Heathen, but they must meet with an unseemly interruption like the present? An interruption by whom? By a woman, whose modesty ought to have restrained her from such an outrage. One of the greatest men that ever lived was St. Paul; and he has said, 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.' I should like to know what kind of respect *that* woman pays to her husband; and who takes care of her children, while she is gadding about the country, endeavouring to corrupt the principles and practice of all to whom she can gain access."

In this address he was supported by the cheers of the meeting; and during the delivery of it the woman sank down in the pew, and covered her face: when a workman exclaimed, in the broad Lancashire dialect, "Newton has shot the Martin;" and another responded, "I will hear that fellow preach."

Mr. Newton then stated that the meeting had been convened for a specific purpose, and from that purpose they would not depart; but they were neither ashamed to avow their belief of the Gospel, nor to meet its adversaries. He gave his address, and invited any persons who had doubts respecting the momentous question which had just been mooted, to visit him, pledging himself kindly to hear their

objections, and to give the reasons which satisfied his own mind that the Gospel is the very truth of God.

He then spoke on the subject of Missions to the Heathen, their nature and purpose, and the benefits which had resulted from them; appealing to the people for the truth of his statements, and to their liberality and kindness in support of the good cause; reminding all present that they had free access to the meeting, and that no twopence had been demanded of any one. The consequence was a handsome collection; and, in the course of a short time, a working-man called at Mr. Newton's house, saying that he had accepted the invitation which was given at the Missionary Meeting, his faith in the Gospel having been shaken, and his mind being ill at rest in a state of doubt and uncertainty. Mr. Newton listened to the man's case, and then gave him such a view of the Gospel, its nature, evidences, and benefits, that the relentings of the poor man were kindled; he began to pray, and to read his Bible; the truth beamed upon his mind, in its own clear and heavenly light; he joined the Methodist Society, believed with the heart unto righteousness, and became a new man in Christ Jesus.

During the three years in which Dr. Newton was officially connected with the Salford Circuit, he was annually elected as the Secretary of the British Conference; he lent his efficient services at the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, and attended every Conference in Ireland; and on the weekdays he travelled through the kingdom, attending Missionary Meetings, preaching in behalf of the trust-funds of chapels, both in winter and summer, not reserving for himself, from year to year, a single day for retire-

ment and leisure; serving his own Circuit on the Lord's day, so as to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. A few brief extracts from his letters will show that in passing through this wonderful course of labour his zeal never languished, and his spirit was as devout, cheerful, and buoyant as ever. To his kind friend, Mrs. Perkins, of Darlington, he writes, under the date of March 8th, 1845:—

“Thank God, we have some prosperity in this Circuit. One hundred and three persons were admitted into our Society on trial, fifty into full membership, in the last quarter. But we hope to see greater things than these. Personal holiness is highly needful, in order to public usefulness. May the Spirit of holiness be shed forth upon us in larger and richer effusions! To receive and give, to get and to do good, are the only things that are worth living for in this world: and it will be our own fault if we do not thus live. As we know not what shall be on the morrow, *now* is the day; and we are commissioned to say, ‘Come; for all things are *now* ready.’”

The following lines, which he addressed to the same valued friend, only a few days afterwards, will show the kind of correspondence in which he was almost daily employed:—“I have carefully examined my engagements up to the time of the Irish Conference, and only find one day at liberty; that is, Tuesday, April 21st; and I fear that will be too early for your purpose. You can name it to Mr. Hunt; and if he think it will do, either he or you will inform me. Several other places want that day. Our Missionary Society is out of debt. Thank God. It is, however, one thing to get

out of debt, and another to keep out. The Lord be with you!”

To Robert Townend, Esq., of Manchester, he thus writes from the Bristol Conference of 1846:—“Several venerable and senior Ministers are retiring from Circuit work; especially Messrs. Reece, France, and Maximilian Wilson. This to me is very admonitory, as all of them, with the exception of Mr. Reece, are my juniors on the list. O that I may work while it is day! for the mortal story will soon be ended. But, though we expect to die, we also expect to live; and to live where there is no more death.

“The young men who have finished their probation gave noble testimonies before a large congregation on Monday evening. Thank God, our people will not have to sit under an unconverted Ministry. We have just returned from the ordination service this morning. It was a very solemn, and I hope profitable, season, including the imposition of hands, the charge, and the Lord’s supper. Multitudes there were who could not gain admittance into the chapel; so that a brother preached in the open air. How true it is, that we are now deciding what shall be in the future world! The gracious Lord direct us in all things! If you see any of my family, tell them I am well, and that hard work agrees with me. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!”

To Miss Drummond, of Edinburgh, who so kindly nursed him many years before, when he was dangerously ill in that city, he thus writes from Dundee, under the date of October 20th:—“Here I am; seventy miles back again, to attend the Missionary Meeting this evening. I got safe to Aberdeen on Saturday night, between nine

and ten o'clock. We had a glorious day yesterday. Our own chapel was filled in the morning; and in the evening the largest Free church in the city was full to overflowing long before the hour. It was said two thousand persons were in the church, and twice that number in the street who could not get admittance. I return to-morrow to the meeting in Aberdeen; and suppose I must take the steamer for Newcastle on Wednesday noon.

“And now, my dear Miss Drummond, permit me to thank you for your more than polite attention, your Christian kindness, to me while I was your guest. Nor can I forget the unaffected kindness of Miss Tucker and Miss Fleming, to whom I beg my Christian and affectionate remembrance. The Lord be with you all!”

Among the unnumbered friends of Dr. Newton whom he attached to himself by his personal urbanity, and his zeal in the cause of Christ, we must rank Mr. John Harrison, of Gainford, in the Darlington Circuit, to whom we are indebted for the following facts, which place in a striking light the diligence and self-denial of that faithful and laborious man. He says: “Though the place of my birth, where I spent the early years of my life, was only about ten miles from Roxby, I was not acquainted with Dr. Newton till he began to attend Missionary Meetings at Whitby, and not intimately until Missionary Meetings were held in the Dales, where we were frequently privileged with his valuable help.

“In the year 1835 we removed to a farm near Guisborough, in the Stokesley Circuit, where we had the pleasure of seeing him about twice a year, when he preached in behalf of the chapel or of the Missions. In the year 1851 we removed to Gainford, where we again

had the pleasure of two visits from him in a short time. Whenever he visited us he was present at the time appointed; we had crowded congregations; a hallowed influence attended his word, both in public and private; and he was a means of much spiritual good.

“He generally left early in the morning, in order to avail himself of public conveyances; and frequently said, ‘If one feel drowsy, the best thing is to get on one’s feet immediately.’ Sometimes he would say to my wife, ‘I do not know where I shall be at dinner-time to-day; and will thank you for a little cold meat to take in my pocket.’ Once, when a youth of mine went to meet him at Stockton, knowing that it would be late before he could arrive at Guisborough, we packed a little cold meat in a basket for his use; and when my son told him what he had brought, the Doctor said, ‘That is grand: I will eat it on the road.’ Having done this, he said, ‘Now I have had a good dinner: you shall take yours, and I will drive in the meanwhile.’

“On the 8th of December, 1846, I met him at Middlesborough, on his way from Durham. He attended the Missionary Meeting at Guisborough in the afternoon, and preached in the evening. The day was wet; but in the course of the night the frost set in, accompanied by a tremendous storm of snow and hail. He rose at four o’clock to meet the first train at Redcar, a distance of eight miles. I said, ‘As it is so very dark, and the storm so high, surely you will not go?’ ‘O yes,’ he emphatically replied. We had to face the storm, nearly all the way: in some places the snow was very deep, so that it was with difficulty we could get on. When we were within a short distance of the unfinished station,

my mare was afraid to proceed, the road being bad, and the ice breaking under her feet. I got out of the gig to lead her, when my hat was blown off my head, and carried to a considerable distance. I had no sooner recovered it than the Doctor's hat suffered the same fate. When I had overtaken it, and placed it again in his hands, he said, 'One would not be hired to undertake this work; but, as the old man said, *There is the cause.*' As soon as he had uttered these words, we heard the engine starting; when he exclaimed, 'O dear, O dear! what shall I do?' I said, 'Will not the ten o'clock train serve your purpose?' To which he responded, 'O no!' At that moment the engine was put back. He leaped out of the gig, and climbed over the gate, which he found to be fastened; the porter seized his luggage; he took his seat in one of the carriages, and was thus enabled to fulfil the engagements of the day."

While he was thus putting forth all his strength in the service of his Lord, and voluntarily submitting to hardships of this kind, there were "false brethren," as we shall ere long have occasion to show, who were at this very time secretly plotting how they might ruin his character, and destroy his usefulness; envying him the popularity which his talents and services commanded.

When he arrived in Dublin, on the 21st of June in the following year, to preach in behalf of the trust-funds of the chapel in Lower Abbey-street, he thus addressed Mrs. Newton:—"Here I am, in old Erin once more; and, I thank God, in perfect health. My cough appears to have left me.

"The Messrs. Meek were very kind to me, in Wigan, in the evening of the day on which I left you. We had

a large congregation and a good collection. At Holywell I was the guest of a family of church-people, and had every comfort that hospitality could afford. We had a good passage by daylight, from Liverpool to this city, on Saturday.

“The Abbey-street chapel was full yesterday at twelve and seven o’clock. Judge Crampton was one of the collectors. Dr. Henry, President of the Government Board of Education, was one of my auditors at the noon service. The collection was within a few shillings of fifty pounds, notwithstanding the starvation of this country. I am published to preach at Kingstown this evening, and sail from hence to Belfast to-morrow. I am quite sure the sea-air does me good.”

From Belfast, he writes to her again, under the date of June 26th :—“I think I never, in years that are for ever gone, recognised your handwriting with more pleasure than I did yesterday, when your letter was presented to me. I felt thankful for the art of putting thoughts and sentiments upon paper, and for the arrangements that are made in these lands for their rapid and safe transit.

“To-morrow I am appointed to preach at eleven and seven o’clock, in the large and beautiful chapel in this town; and on Monday evening I have to preach and beg in the Frederick-street chapel. The Lord be my helper!

“This ill-fated country is in a sad condition. Nearly two thousand members of our Societies have fled to America, or more distant lands, and nearly one thousand have passed into eternity, during the past year. The work of death is still going on; and the malignant distemper is increasing every day. May God in mercy arrest its progress, and sanctify the visitation!

“I thank the Lord, your old husband is well. He sleeps well; he eats well; and has scarcely coughed once since his arrival in old Erin.

“The Lord preserve us and our people in the simplicity of truth and love! The Lord be with you all!”

The British Conference was held this year, 1847, in Liverpool, under the presidency of the Rev. Samuel Jackson; and Dr. Newton was again appointed, as its Secretary, to record its doings. He thus writes to Mrs. Newton on the first day of its assembling:—“I hope we shall have a good Conference. I am sure you will pray for this; and that your husband, when some matters are brought forward, may refrain even from good words.

“The opening this morning was solemn. The President called upon the venerable Mr. Reece and your old husband to pray. We have had a public prayer-meeting at twelve o’clock, and have published for another special devotional service this evening, on account of the fever, and the Parliamentary elections which are now going on. We have not forgotten the special prayer-meeting which was held here in the time of the cholera, when Watson, and Clarke, and Taylor prayed. From that day the plague was comparatively stayed. I know that you will approve of this arrangement.”

The “matters” referred to in this letter, which he expected to be “brought forward” during the Conference, and in reference to which he asks the prayers of Mrs. Newton that the grace of forbearance might be vouchsafed to him, were doubtless certain anonymous pamphlets which were then extensively circulated by post, containing slanderous attacks upon his character, and upon some of the most distinguished of his brethren. These vile missives

contained the name of no printer ; they bore the post-marks of various towns, that no clue might be obtained as to the authors ; yet the pamphlets themselves contained internal evidence, strong and undeniable, that one or more faithless Preachers were concerned in these deeds of sin and darkness. To control his temper under this base treatment, and to set a watch before the door of his lips, Dr. Newton felt to be a sacred duty ; but considering the greatness of the provocation, he asked Divine aid, and he obtained it ; so that, like his Lord, “ when he was reviled, he reviled not again.” At this Conference the Wesleyan Ministers generally made an explicit and solemn disavowal of all participation in this foul conspiracy ; but the real authors of the mischief shrank from this ordeal ; yet no decisive measures were at that time taken to bring them and their doings to light. Some said, “ Judge nothing before the time ;” but whether the forbearance which was then exercised towards these guilty men was the right course, may admit of a doubt. They regarded forbearance in the Conference as an indication of fear, and therefore grew more and more daring and vindictive. Mr. Fletcher’s expostulation with Walter Shirley and his party, on the occasion of their attack upon Mr. Wesley, is strikingly applicable to Dr. Newton and his masked assailants :—“ After amazing labours he flies still, with unwearied diligence, through the three kingdoms, calling sinners to repentance, and to the healing fountain of Jesus’s blood. Though oppressed with the weight of nearly seventy years, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labours, all the young Ministers in England, perhaps in Christendom. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the Redeemer, and

the good of souls. And shall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues, our hands, against him? If we *will* quarrel, can we find nobody to fall out with, but the Minister upon whom God puts the greatest honour?" "O Jesus of Nazareth, Thou rejected of men, Thou who wast once called a deceiver of the people, suffer it not; lest the raging bear of persecution come suddenly out of the wood upon those sons of discord, and tear them in pieces!"*

At this Conference Dr. Newton was appointed to the Stockport North Circuit, where he met with a most welcome reception, and laboured with his wonted diligence and fidelity for three years, esteemed and honoured by a pious and loyal people, who appreciated his worth and talents, and deemed it a privilege to attend his ministry, and to be placed under his pastoral care. They could always calculate upon his pulpit-services on the Sabbath-day; when he was absent from his Circuit, serving the Connexion generally, his place was supplied by an efficient substitute; and at every opportunity they knew that they would be favoured with his counsel and sympathy. He entered upon the duties of his new appointment before the arrival of his family in Stockport, and addressed Mrs. Newton and his daughters as follows, on the 31st of August:—"My beloved wife and children will be glad to hear that I am well, and working hard, though a homeless wanderer. I commenced my labours in my new parish on Sunday, and had a very large congregation. I earnestly hope the right impression was made. Good care is taken of me at Mr. Marshall's, where I arrived on Saturday evening.

* Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Minutes, pp. 96, 97. Edit. 1772.

“I opened the chapel at Blowing Sands yesterday, and preached at Blackpool in the evening. I have come by an early train to Manchester this morning. I write this in Deansgate, and must run up to Cheetham-Hill, to see my old and faithful friend, Mrs. Johnson, before I set off for Haywood. She is very ill, but happy in God. To-morrow I am to be at Huddersfield, and at Haworth on Friday. I am engaged for Lytham on Monday evening, September 6th; and must be with you, ‘by hook or by crook,’ on Tuesday, the 7th, which is the anniversary of our wedding-day.

“I hope we shall be happy and useful at Stockport. God grant that it may be so! A brother has said there will not be such a Circuit Plan as ours in the whole Connexion; having upon it two Doctors of Divinity, and a Member of Parliament. Dr. Hannah is on our Plan. Should next Monday evening be fine, and I can get a boat, I shall try to get across the water after the preaching; so that you may tell the friends at Southport, that if their services connected with the opening of their chapel are not ended, I can give them a sermon on the 7th.

“I hope you take care of yourselves. The Lord bless you all!”

Perhaps no man ever lived who had a greater number of personal friends than Dr. Newton. Accustomed as he was, for many years, to travel through the Methodist Connexion, in the length and breadth of it, there were families in the various places which he visited, who received him gladly, and felt it to be a high privilege to afford him every accommodation in their power; and their kind hospitality made a deep impression upon his

generous and grateful spirit. Among these friends were Mr. and Mrs. Perkins, formerly of London, and now of Darlington. They had an only child, a pious and promising son, who died of consumption soon after the Doctor entered upon his labours in the Stockport Circuit. When he heard of this sad bereavement, he addressed to the sorrowing mother the following friendly and appropriate letter:—

“Permit me to offer my most sincere sympathy and condolence on the occasion of the bereavement which you and Mr. Perkins have been called to sustain. Your dear son has escaped away, and is taken to an early rest. Pain and suffering with him are no more. They only who have entered into *life*, know what it is to be where there is no more death. But of this we are assured, that to depart and be with Christ is far better. Still, however, we cannot but feel when the tenderest ties are severed by the stroke of death. But O, what a consolation it is to you, to be fully assured that your beloved son is for ever safe and happy! ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.’

“My earnest hope and prayer is, and shall be, that this dispensation of an all-wise and gracious Providence may be sanctified to his father.

‘For *us* they sicken, and for *us* they die.’

God grant that it may be so!”

Through the whole of his first year at Stockport, Dr. Newton was, as usual, “in labours more abundant.” In his private correspondence he often refers to his advancing years, and to the consequent close of his ministry; yet he was still strong to labour, was scarcely sensible of

any decay in his strength, and his heart was as intent as ever upon the fulfilment of his allotted task of duty, resolved to employ all his time and energies in the service of his Lord. After itinerating through the Connexion in the months of autumn and winter, he again lent his aid at the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in London, at the return of spring; and then hastened to the Irish Conference, where he was welcomed by many a warm and generous heart. On his arrival in Dublin, towards the latter end of June, he thus addressed Mrs. Newton:—

“Here I am, once more, in health, and greatly refreshed after a good night’s rest. I know not when I have slept so soundly and so long. We started from Liverpool yesterday morning, about four o’clock, and had a most splendid passage. I received a most hearty welcome from Mr. Owen and his family in Mountjoy-square. Dr. Bunting is not here, so that Mr. President and myself are the only Preachers from England. I hope we shall have a good Conference.

“This is an ill-fated country; and yet, as Her Majesty’s steamer approached the quay at Kingstown, all was dash and splendour. Naval and military officers in their uniforms, and ladies most splendidly dressed, paraded the quay, as if want, starvation, and death were unknown.

“Mr. William Stewart, through age and infirmity, retires from the office of Secretary to the Conference, and Mr. Mathews is elected in his place. Two or three of the Preachers are leaving Ireland for America. A kind friend in England, most probably Mr. Farmer, has just sent five hundred pounds, to assist the Irish Connexion in its present distressed condition.”

After his return from Ireland he paid his annual visit to Derby; and in reference to this event he thus speaks in a letter to his family:—"I was glad to receive your joint communication. The Sabbath was a glorious day at Derby. The large new chapel overflowed, and the collection was larger than it has been for many years. Good Mr. Turner scarcely knew whether he was in the body or out of it.

"When you write to Frank, give him his father's love. Tell him that I pray for him many a time every day. I shall have your prayers. God be with you all!"

The British Conference of this year was held in the town of Hull; and Dr. Newton was elected a fourth time to fill the presidential chair,—an honour which was never conferred on any other man, except his friend Dr. Bunting. This Conference was memorable on various accounts. It was the first that was ever held in that important place; and the kind hospitality of the friends was beyond all praise. The public religious services connected with it were numerously attended, and eminently seasons of spiritual influence and blessing; but in the Conference itself the elements of evil, from which the Methodist Connexion has since so greatly suffered, and the cause of religion has been so awfully disgraced, were then developed in a manner which no one could mistake. A feeble instrumentality has often been the means of incalculable mischief. The world was ruined by a lie which Satan uttered, and which the mother of our race believed. The throne of the man after God's own heart was subverted, and the Israelitish nation alienated from the Lord's anointed, by the glosing misrepresentations of his faithless son, who desired to usurp his father's authority.

A small number of Preachers entered into a conspiracy to destroy the influence of several of the most trustworthy and useful Ministers of the body, by anonymous attacks upon their character, from which it was impossible that they should defend themselves. The means employed in this nefarious warfare were a series of pamphlets and a reckless newspaper; and it was manifest from what took place in the Hull Conference, that the party had succeeded in imbuing with their own spirit some other men, from whom better things might have been expected. It was difficult to conduct the ordinary business of the Conference. Objections were made to everything, and these were connected with rude and offensive personalities. The annual assembling of the Wesleyan Ministers is usually an occasion of spiritual refreshment, and these servants of Christ separate with renewed strength and zest, resolved to apply themselves with increased assiduity to the duties of their calling; but from the Hull Conference many a faithful man retired pensive and sad, apprehensive that days of evil were at hand, in which the attention of Ministers would be diverted from their proper work,—the conversion of sinners,—their time and energies being employed in wordy strife; and that many weak believers would be turned out of the way. These fears have been amply verified by subsequent events.

In these feelings Dr. Newton participated; yet he did what he could, both during the Conference and afterwards, by kindness and urbanity, and by the meekness of wisdom, combined with strict fidelity in the maintenance of his trust, to soften the spirits of the hostile party, to sustain the confidence of faithful but timid men, and thus avert as much as possible the threatening

calamity. He addressed his family in strains of piety; but we no longer observe the spirit of earnest hope and exultation which usually characterizes his Conference letters. Thus he wrote to his wife and daughters, from Hull, soon after he had entered upon his presidential duties:—"I have just time to tell you that I am in good health, and as happy as a man can expect to be with such a weight of responsibility resting upon him. We had a blessed day on the Sabbath, when I had to preach as the new President in the forenoon. I believe the Lord was my Helper.

"I had to examine thirty candidates for our full Ministry on Saturday night. The ordination takes place to-morrow.

"Poor Mr. Howard, of Leeds, is gone. He died relying on the great atonement of Christ; and his temporal affairs were all settled before he expired. What is our life?

"Twenty-nine out of the thirty young men who are to be ordained, attributed their present position chiefly to religious training; the example and prayers of their parents, especially of their mothers. *We* have prayed. O let us pray more for all our children! Thank God for those of them who have chosen the better part."

When Dr. Newton separated from his brethren in Hull, his duties as the President of the Conference did not end, but continued through the year; yet there was no perceptible diminution in the number of his occasional services. The care of all the Circuits of the Connexion, to a considerable extent, devolved upon him; and he was the willing servant of all, ready for every good work. In the course of the autumn he visited Scotland, where

his preaching had long been highly appreciated, and where crowds of all denominations flocked to hear him. On the 2d of November he thus addressed Mrs. Newton and his children from Edinburgh:—"The kind Hand which has so long been upon us for good, brought me here in safety. We had a large tea-meeting here on Tuesday evening, after my arrival in this city. Yesterday we had the District-Meeting, and the Missionary Meeting at Leith in the evening. At one o'clock to-day I set off for Dundee, and proceed to Aberdeen to-morrow.

"What recollections rushed into my mind as I came by the railway from Newcastle to 'Old Reeky!' Our ride together on the dicky of the coach, with old Nanny in the inside! The scenery! Nearly half a century since then has elapsed. Children and children's children have been born: whom may God, for Christ's sake, for ever bless! What is our life? May we make the best of what may yet remain!

"The Rev. the President is somebody here. The Lord enable me to act worthy of my vocation! Janet is very kind."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE British Conference of 1849 was held in Manchester, and Dr. Newton was kindly entertained at the house of his friend, Robert Townend, Esq., of Broughton, as was also the Rev. Edward Batty, who had come from the Channel Islands to attend this annual meeting of his brethren in the Ministry. Mr. Batty was present in the Conference during the morning sitting of the first day of its assembling, and then returned to Mr. Townend's indisposed. Medical aid was obtained; but the complaint proved to be the Asiatic cholera, which terminated fatally about midnight. He was a spiritually-minded man, took a lively interest in the proceedings of the Conference that morning, expressed his thankfulness that he had been able to tender the votes which he had that day given, declared his cheerful trust in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, his entire resignation to the Divine will; and died in great peace, full of immortal hope.

From the time of Mr. Batty's seizure, till his death, Dr. Newton displayed the most perfect self-possession, arising from an unshaken confidence in God; and his prayers, that the shield of the Divine protection might be placed around the family, made a deep impression upon all its members. His Christian fortitude was to them an example, and a means of encouragement. Several of his friends attempted to persuade him to remove to other lodgings; but his answer was, "No; I will stand

my ground, and not forsake my friends in the time of their trouble."

Writing to Mrs. Newton on the third day after the assembling of the Conference, he says: "I have just time to say that I am quite as well as usual. We have, however, had a most painful visitation in the sudden death of Mr. Batty. He was in the Conference at twelve o'clock at noon, and in heaven at half-past twelve that night! I committed his body to the dust the following day, at Cheetham-Hill. We have no fear at all on the ground of infection. If, therefore, you can come over this afternoon, I am satisfied you need not fear. We are in the hands of an all-powerful and merciful Providence.

"On the motion of Mr. Reece, seconded by Dr. Bunting, I received the unanimous thanks of the Conference. I could not leave the Conference when you called at the door of the chapel, as I was in the act of calling the newly-elected President" (the writer of these memoirs) "to the chair. We have had a good beginning, and I devoutly hope we shall be conducted to a happy termination.

"We have sent for —, —, and —, to clear their characters if they can. God defend the right!"

To this Conference many persons had looked forward with intense interest, and even with anxiety. In the Wesleyan body the evil to which reference has already been made was gathering strength. It had done immense harm to the cause of spiritual religion; and it was perceived that, unless its progress could be arrested, a general blight upon the Methodist Ministry and Societies would inevitably ensue. Evil surmising, jealousy, backbiting,

reviling, and calumny, in certain quarters, had taken the place of mutual confidence and brotherly affection; and, if this state of things were to become general, the Ministers and Societies saw that, instead of directing their energies against ignorance and ungodliness at home, and Heathenism abroad, they would be wasting their lives in the indulgence of malignant passions, and in mutual recriminations. Anonymous pamphlets,* containing attacks upon

* In respect of an anonymous assailant of character in the last century, whom these pamphleteers could imitate in nothing but his rancour and audacity, Dr. Johnson says: "Of Junius it cannot be said, as of Ulysses, that he scatters ambiguous expressions among the vulgar; for he cries 'havoock' without reserve, and endeavours to 'let slip the dogs of war,' ignorant whither they are going, and careless what may be their prey.

"Junius has sometimes made his satire felt; but let not injudicious admiration mistake the venom of the shaft for the vigour of the bow. He has sometimes sported with lucky malice; but to him that knows his company, it is not hard to be sarcastic in a mask. While he walks, like Jack the Giant-killer, in a coat of darkness, he may do much mischief with little strength.

"Junius burst into notice with a blaze of impudence which has rarely glared upon the world before, and drew the rabble after him as a monster makes a show. When he had once provided for his safety by impenetrable secrecy, he had nothing to combat but truth and justice, enemies whom he knows to be feeble in the dark. Being then at liberty to indulge himself in all the immunities of invisibility; out of the reach of danger, he has been bold; out of the reach of shame, he has been confident."

"Junius is an unusual phenomenon, on which some have gazed with wonder and terror; but wonder and terror are transitory passions. He will soon be more closely viewed or more attentively examined, and what folly has taken for a comet, that from its flaming hair shook pestilence and war, inquiry will find to be only a meteor formed by the vapours of putrefying democracy, and kindled into flame by the effervescence of interest struggling with conviction; which, after having plunged its followers in a bog, will leave us inquiring why we regard it."—"Falkland's Islands."

the characters of the most able and useful men in the body, were increased in number, and circulated with avidity.

Among the ancient people of God, when men fell under suspicion of particular crimes, the Almighty directed that they should be required to clear themselves upon oath, and even by solemn sacrifice, or that they should be regarded as guilty. (Exod. xxii. 10, 11; Deut. xxi. 1-9.) In accordance with the principle and spirit of these regulations, the great body of the Wesleyan Ministers affixed their names to a public declaration, solemnly averring, before God and His people, that they were clear in this matter. It was, therefore, impossible that the guilty parties should any longer remain in their concealment; and, although it was difficult to produce direct evidence against them, as they had published anonymously, and concealed even the printer's name, yet facts had transpired in the course of the preceding year which amounted to the strongest presumptive proof of which the case was capable, against some of the men who had been suspected from the beginning, and especially the man who was regarded as the ringleader. It was, therefore, resolved to bring the matter to an immediate issue, and the men who were believed to have done this thing were summoned to appear before their brethren, some of whom had thus been maligned and greatly injured.

From the origin of Wesleyan Methodism it has been an established and recognised practice to subject every one of its Ministers to an annual examination as to his doctrinal sentiments and teaching, his moral and religious character, and his practical attention to the discipline of the Connexion. Inquiries on these several points are partly proposed to each man personally, and partly to his colleagues

and brethren ; and it was resolved, in the present instance, to put the question candidly and directly to each of these suspected parties, whether or not he was concerned in the composition or the circulation of the anonymous and defamatory pamphlets, which had so seriously disturbed the peace of the body. This inquiry produced an effect similar to that which, according to Milton, was produced by the spear of Ithuriel :—

..... “ For no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness.”

When this question was proposed to the man who was believed to have taken the lead in this scheme of mischief, he said : “ Why is this question proposed to me, rather than to the other Ministers of the body ? ” “ Because universal suspicion falls upon you,” was the answer ; which was echoed by a loud response from every part of the Conference, consisting of four or five hundred Ministers, all of whom at that moment fixed their eyes upon him. “ I will not answer that question,” was his reply. “ I will submit to expulsion rather than answer it.”

Time was given him for consideration ; he was expostulated with, and invited again to meet the men to whom he had long stood in the relation of a brother, and either acknowledge his sin or declare his innocence. But he was inflexible, and would never again meet the eyes which were fastened upon him when he was required to give an answer respecting a plain matter of fact ; thus in effect declaring that while he claimed their confidence and affection as a friend and a brother, and as such took a part in their work, and sat in their assemblies, he would not deny that he was

a secret and determined enemy both to them and their proceedings. He was, therefore, necessarily severed from a connexion of which he had rendered himself unworthy; for what sane Ministers of Christ will publicly recognise, as a co-Pastor, a man who, in effect, tells them to their faces, that, in spite of them, he will wear a mask? Two other men, his accomplices, were discarded at the same time, but upon somewhat different grounds. They had both sorely taxed the patience of their brethren for years, and had, indeed, been kept in the body by an almost unexampled course of forbearance; and now, in opposition to every dictate of gratitude and modesty, they assumed an independent jurisdiction, by commencing the publication of a monthly journal, in which they proposed to discuss the acts of their brethren,—men immensely wiser and better than themselves,—and even to overhaul the proceedings of the Conference. This agitating project they positively refused to abandon.

These acts of discipline excited considerable attention at the time, and in some quarters have been censured as arbitrary and unjust; and one public journalist has inquired by what right Mr. Wesley, and the Methodist Conference after him, have formed rules to regulate the conduct of religious people, and have even claimed the power to depose men from their Ministry? The answer may be given in a few words. When Mr. Wesley went into the highways, calling sinners to repentance, and to the enjoyment of salvation through faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ, many persons were awakened to an anxious concern for their eternal interests, and earnestly requested him to take them under his pastoral care and guidance. He had an unquestionable right to declare upon what terms he would

thus receive them; and he claimed that right. Hence the Rules of the Societies, which he drew up, declaring what, according to his apprehensions, the professors of spiritual religion ought to be, as to their tempers and demeanour. Yet neither man nor woman was required to enter into religious fellowship with him, nor to remain in such fellowship an hour longer than they felt it to be a privilege and a benefit. But while they did remain, they were, of course, expected to conform to the Rules, according to the pledges which they gave when they were admitted.

At a later period, men who deemed themselves called of God to preach the Gospel offered themselves to Mr. Wesley, to labour in connexion with him, and in furtherance of the great work of which he was the chief instrument and director. Here again he had an unquestionable right to determine upon what terms he would accept the services of these men, and recognise them as fellow-labourers with himself. This right he also claimed and exercised: and hence the system of ministerial discipline which he drew up, and occasionally modified as circumstances seemed to require. No men were compelled to labour as Preachers in connexion with Mr. Wesley; but all who chose to stand in that relation were bound to conform to the regulations by which their brethren were governed, and to which they had severally declared their assent.

Thus far, it is presumed, Mr. Wesley did nothing more than is virtually done by every man who accepts the pastoral charge in a voluntary church, or who in such a church accepts the services of a co-Pastor. The principles upon which he acted are universally recognised, not only in free ecclesiastical communities, but in business partnerships and commercial transactions; only he was provi-

dentially called to carry out those principles to a wider extent than any other Minister, at least in modern times. No wise man ever enters into any important alliances, without a distinct agreement as to the grounds upon which such alliances are based, and the manner in which they are to be regulated.

When Mr. Wesley died, the power which he possessed, as the centre of operation in the Methodist Connexion, had to be lodged somewhere; otherwise the Connexion which he had formed, and from which tens of thousands of people had derived endless benefits, would necessarily be dissolved. By his appointment that power is vested in the Conference, which meets every twelve months, and which has hitherto acted upon his principles, and has carried out his plans. No man is compelled to be a Wesleyan Minister, to labour in connexion with the Conference, or to remain a Wesleyan Minister a day longer than he chooses; but while he does remain, he is justly expected and required to submit to the Rules, which are alike binding upon him and the whole of his brethren. One of these Rules is, that he shall submit to a yearly examination both as to his creed and his practice: and the object of that examination is, to afford satisfaction to his brethren that he is sound in the faith, and that in respect of his moral and religious conduct he is unblameable.

The relation in which the Wesleyan Ministers stand to each other is well known to be more strict and intimate than that which subsists between the Ministers of almost any other community. They exchange Circuits, are pledged to teach the same doctrines, and to enforce the same discipline; and submitting, as they do, to a yearly examination, they are answerable, before the world and the

church, for each other's character and conduct. Hence it is that misunderstandings among them are necessarily productive of calamitous results, not only to themselves, but to the people among whom they labour. Their form of discipline, therefore, drawn up by their venerated father in the Gospel, contains the following items:—

“What can be done, in order to a closer union of our Helpers with each other?”

“Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at present, and the absolute necessity of it.

“Let them pray for a desire of union.

“Let them speak freely to each other.

“When they meet, let them never part without prayer.

“Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts.

“Let them never speak slightingly of each other in any kind.

“Let them defend one another's characters in every thing, so far as consists with truth: and,

“Let them labour in honour each to prefer the other before himself.”

Cases may be easily conceived in which a Minister may be dismissed from a particular religious community without any just reflection either upon his personal honour or his official character. A Minister in an Episcopal Church may innocently adopt the theory of Presbyterianism, or of Independency, and feel it his duty to teach accordingly; or an Independent Minister may become a Presbyterian or an Episcopalian with a strictly honest mind; and in these cases the dismissal of the men from their former connexions, and their removal to other bodies with whom their sentiments agree, are every way reasonable and just,

and are not necessarily connected with any unkind or unholy feeling in the parties concerned.

But the cases with which the Methodist Conference of 1849 was called to deal were of a very different kind. They related not only to opinions, but to morals. They involved not only an infringement of conventional rules, which men had promised before God to observe, but a violation of the law of Christ, the eternal law of truth, and charity, and peace; as well as of the moral law, the ninth Commandment of which says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Here were men sustaining the sacred character of Christ's Ministers, who were all but universally believed to be concerned in the publication of a series of pamphlets, assailing with sarcasm, contempt, and bitterness, the good name of their brother Ministers, and calculated entirely to destroy their usefulness. These men were not suddenly overcome by the force of temptation, so as to speak unadvisedly with their lips; but deliberately, and of set purpose, planned schemes of mischief, and persevered in the execution of them, from year to year, with unabated malignity; and all this for the purpose of rendering nugatory the ministrations of men who were associated with themselves in carrying into effect the great purpose for which the Son of God came down from heaven, and shed His life-blood upon the cross. The sin of these unhappy men acquired a peculiar aggravation from the circumstance, that they were challenged and invited every year to state whatever they knew to be matter of blame in any one of their brethren. In every District-Meeting, and at every Conference, the names of the men who were so maliciously assailed were called over; inquiry was made whether there was any objection to their

ministerial, religious, or moral character ; a pause was then made, inviting scrutiny and animadversion ; and repeatedly did the accused Ministers themselves stand up in those meetings, declare their innocence of the things that were charged upon them, and call upon their accusers to show themselves, and produce their proofs. When the men thus cruelly slandered were present to answer for themselves, their accusers were as silent as death ; and yet year after year did they persist in their course of anonymous defamation.

The case of Dr. Newton may be adduced as an example of what is here stated. In the universal records of the Christian church it would be difficult to find a character more blameless and upright ; and he was as kind and peaceable as he was pure. Yet because he was popular, was faithful in the maintenance of rule and order in the body to which he belonged, and was therefore regarded as standing in the way of these restless spirits, he was loaded with the foulest abuse. His extraordinary labours were imputed to corrupt and sordid motives, in the absence of any vestige of proof ; and every effort was made to cover him with odium, and defeat the object of his ministry. Justly might he have prayed, with the Psalmist, "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked ; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity : who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words : that they may shoot in secret.....They encourage themselves in an evil matter : they commune of laying snares privily ; they say, Who shall see them ? They search out iniquities ; they accomplish a diligent search : both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep." (Psalm lxiv. 2-6.)

Now if the Gospel be a fable, and men are not accountable for their actions, all this may be regarded as the pastime of men who have nothing to fear, and nothing to hope for, beyond the life which they spend upon earth as a shadow; but if such Ministers as Dr. Newton are the servants of Christ, called and sanctioned by Him to train up for the bliss of heaven the souls which He has redeemed by His blood, then all such wanton attempts to render their labours useless are not only an open violation of His precepts, but acts of direct opposition to His will and purpose, and must be answered for at His tribunal.

If the men whom the Conference of 1849 discarded had not been actually guilty of writing and publishing the vile pamphlets of which we have spoken, they rendered themselves utterly unfit for the Wesleyan Ministry by their unwillingness to purge themselves of the baseness and sin which the authorship and publication of these pamphlets involved, and by refusing to declare their abhorrence of practices so mean, impious, and immoral. The Conference could not any longer recognise these men as brother Ministers without partaking of their sin. If any doubt remained as to the propriety of their severance from the Wesleyan body, that doubt must be for ever removed by the subsequent conduct of the parties. They have since thrown off the mask: with the aid of their confederates, they have reprinted the obnoxious pamphlets, and given them the widest possible circulation through the country: they have perambulated the land, holding public meetings, appealing to the bad passions of the populace; attempting to "stop the supplies," and thus effect the starvation of aged Ministers and widows, to embarrass the trust-estates of Methodist places of religious worship, and

to break up the Wesleyan Missions in the heathen world. At the same time they have clamoured for organic changes in the Wesleyan economy, which, if adopted, would effect the disruption of the Societies and the Connexion. In this course they have had the support of the infidel press of this country: and—tell it not in Gath!—they have been abetted and urged onward in their evil career by a large portion of the Dissenting press, which has sent forth weekly, monthly, and quarterly insinuations and invectives against the Wesleyan Ministers and people, who offered the writers no provocation whatever.

At the Manchester Conference, when the acts of discipline which we have related took place, Dr. Newton was relieved from the cares and responsibilities of the presidency, which he had borne for the last twelve months; but the interest which he took in the proceedings of that body was as deep as it had ever been. Of that feeling it was impossible that he should divest himself while he retained life and consciousness. By the agency of Methodism he had been made “wise unto salvation;” he had witnessed the beneficial effects of the system in every part of Great Britain and Ireland, and upon the continent of America; so that his life was bound up with the system, and the maintenance of its purity and success was as dear to him as his own soul. These acts of discipline had his entire concurrence. He lamented their necessity; his heart yearned over the men who had so grievously lost sight of their ministerial vows and vocation; but he was thoroughly persuaded that while they remained in the Body there was no hope of peace, but the certain prospect of continual strife and heart-burning. He believed that the calling of these restless

men to an account was matter of absolute duty ; he saw everywhere the immense mischief of which they were the authors ; he knew their confirmed principles and habits ; and he was convinced that the mistaken forbearance with which they had for years been treated, had proved the ruin of many souls. Their ceaseless efforts tended to the extinction of that "charity" which is an essential element of true godliness, and without which the "doings" of even professed Christians "are nothing worth." "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation ; and a house divided against a house falleth." "The leaven of malice and wickedness" in a religious community is like the dry rot in a family-mansion. Unless its progress be arrested, speedy and certain ruin will ensue.

That the men who have assailed the institutions of Methodism, and the character of its Ministers, should have been successful to a considerable extent, is not at all surprising. Several of the Apostolic churches, and the Apostles themselves, were subjected to similar annoyance from "false brethren," some of whom, it would appear, were so violent as to make attempts against the life of St. Paul, in this respect rivalling the hostility of the Heathen, and of the unbelieving Jews. (2 Cor. xi. 26.) In all communities, there are persons who are easily misled by bold statements, and are ready to espouse the cause of men who place themselves in opposition to established rule and order. "He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers ; because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of regiment is subject ; but the secret lets and difficulties, which in public proceedings are innumerable

and inevitable, they have not ordinarily the judgment to consider.”* “Novelty captivates the superficial and thoughtless; vehemence delights the discontented and turbulent. He that contradicts acknowledged truth will always have an audience; he that vilifies established authority will always find abettors.”†

When the Manchester Conference was ended, Dr. Newton returned to his Circuit, and resumed his course of ministerial labour; not, however, forgetting the kindness of his host in Manchester, and the affecting instance of mortality which had been so recently witnessed in his family. On the 27th of August he thus addressed Mr. Townend:—

“A fortnight has elapsed since I saw you; yet I believe no day has passed in which I have not thought, and that with feelings of devout gratitude, of the goodness of God to us all, during my sojourn with you. Had we known before what was to happen, we might have been alarmed; but what took place has been the occasion of greater thankfulness to God for our preservation in life and health, while it has furnished additional ground of confidence for the future. I find that friends at a distance have felt more than we did, who were on the spot. The malignant cholera is now doing its work in several parts of this country. May the people hear the rod, and learn the lessons which it is intended to teach!

“I have been working hard, in my way, since I left you: but the hymn says,—

‘Labour is rest, and pain is sweet.’

Time is on the wing. How swiftly it flies! May we all

* Hooker.

† Johnson.

‘work while it is day!’ I was much pleased with my short visit to Shipley. The friends have built a large school, and are enlarging the chapel. My collection, which consisted of gleanings, amounted to upwards of twenty-four pounds. The chapel-opening is yet to come, when they say I must visit them again.

“And now, my dear friends, permit me to offer my best thanks to you, and to all the family, for your Christian kindness and hospitality while I was under your roof; not forgetting David and the two maid-servants, who were so attentive to me on all occasions. I thought of you, yesterday morning, when, to screen myself from the pelting shower, I used that which is too good to be used on ordinary occasions. May we all be sheltered under every storm to which we may be exposed, and at last enter the haven of eternal repose!”

When this letter was written Dr. Newton had resumed the course of labour in which he had for many years been employed; directing all his energies to the spiritual benefit of the people in his own Circuit and of the Connexion generally. During the autumn he travelled extensively, visiting London and Scotland, and many other places, with unwearied diligence, and a zeal which many waters could not quench. His interleaved almanack bears affecting testimony to these facts, every leaf being covered with the names of places which he had engaged to visit; so that on the 31st of December he could scarcely find room for the touching record, “Another year has come to its close; and here I am, still permitted to try to do something for Him who has done so much for me. May the residue of my days be fully consecrated to His service and glory!”

In the beginning of the year 1850 he was earnestly

requested to pay an extra visit to Ireland, for the purpose of serving the friends at Dungannon; but this he was compelled to decline, because it involved a violation of the rule which he had prescribed to himself, and to which he had hitherto adhered. His answer was addressed to his friend Mr. Waugh: it bears the date of January 31st, and is as follows:—"I would gladly do my best to meet your wishes, and those of the good people at Dungannon, were it practicable; but my rule is fixed, and I dare not depart from it. Give my love to brother Hoey, and tell him that if any arrangement can be made for me to visit them in connexion with the Dublin Conference, I shall be most happy to serve the cause there, as well as I can; but I cannot give a Sabbath to any place out of my own Circuit, except where the Conference appoints me to go. I shall be obliged to give the same answer to the friends at Belfast.

"I have been working hard since the Conference, trying to counteract the mischief which is done by *the three men* in various places. I have no fear for the Mission Fund; but I know there will be a sad falling off in the subscriptions to the Auxiliary Fund in many Circuits. I hope, however, that special donations from the wealthy will more than provide for that. No thanks to these men if our worn-out Ministers or the widows are not starved to death! These are indeed days of blasphemy and rebuke. — has violated the solemn pledges which he gave to the Conference; and I believe a District-Meeting is now sitting on his case. I wish we were rid of some more half-Israel, half-Ashdod men, who do us far more harm than good. In all this there is no small portion of the spirit of the times. The cry is, 'Smash everything that is and has

been, and try something new.' The storm is in some places blowing over; and my hope is, we shall have a purified atmosphere, more healthy than it has been for years past. The Lord sitteth above the water-floods. He reigneth King for ever.

"My breathing has been much affected during the late severe frosts, especially in the morning. I think I have the old man's cough. Thank God, I have been able to keep in my work. How soon I shall be compelled to retire from the field of action, I know not. The will of the Lord be done."

In the spring and summer he continued his extraordinary labours without any abatement; and as an example of the holy and joyous excitement which was produced by the occasional services in which he was almost daily engaged, we will select one case. A new chapel having been erected at Garndiffaith, in the Abergavenny and Pontypool Circuit, he was requested to preach two of the opening sermons, on the 11th of July, 1850. Crowds of people assembled from that and the adjoining Circuits to hear the eloquent and venerable man. He preached the truth with special unction and effect, and cases of conversion attested that the Lord was with His servant. It was a day to be remembered by the warm-hearted Methodists residing among the iron-works of Monmouthshire. The two collections amounted to the noble sum of seventy pounds; but the people were not satisfied with contributing this amount towards the expenses of the chapel. They recollected that the cause of Missions was dear to the heart of the aged Minister who had visited them; and a few individuals resolved to contribute fifty pounds for that object, as a mark of their respect for him. This handsome donation they

forwarded to him through their excellent Minister, the Rev. Thomas Rogerson, who has since died in the Lord,—a man of great fidelity and affection, and a good Preacher. The Doctor had the gratification of placing the fifty pounds in the hands of the Treasurer of the Mission Fund.

The Conference of 1850 was held in London; and as Dr. Newton had now completed his three years' residence in the Stockport North Circuit, his removal was unavoidable; and his future destination, which was to himself a matter of comparatively small moment, affected the comfort of his family, and on this account was to him an occasion of some solicitude. Speaking of it in a letter to Mrs. Newton, he says: "We shall soon have our last remove. May it be a happy one!"

Having gone to London to attend the Preparatory Committees, referring to the same subject, he says: "I feel my confidence is in the Lord. I believe He will direct our way. He has done so in time past; and He—

' Will not now His servants leave,
But bring us through at last.'"

With respect to some mischievous novelties which certain parties wished to substitute for Wesleyan Methodism, under the abused name of "Reform," he adds: "The Conference I hope will make a firm stand. You will, I am sure, pray for us, that the Lord may direct us at this most important Conference."

"July 30th.—This is Wednesday morning: the Conference has commenced; and a blessed commencement we have had. Mr. Marsden and R. Newton were called by the President to engage in prayer. We have had such unity and concord in our various Preparatory Committees

as I never before witnessed. Mr. Heald has done us good service. Some of his speeches were of a very high order as specimens of sanctified eloquence.

“I had a good day on Sabbath last at Derby. We had good congregations, and a larger collection than that of the last year.

“Dr. Beecham is the President, thank God, and Dr. Hannah the Secretary.”

“August 5th.—On the Sabbath evening I preached in the City-road chapel, which may be called the ‘old mother-church,’ to an overflowing congregation. I felt unusual freedom in bearing my testimony to the vital doctrine of salvation by grace, from Eph. ii. 8, 9. This evening I go to Richmond, to preach one of the opening sermons in the new chapel there. I trust the blessed Master will be with His unworthy servant.

“The ordination service will take place to-morrow morning. Thirty-six young men are to be ordained to the sacred office.”

“This is Monday morning, August 12th. Last night I preached in the beautiful new chapel at Poplar. I believe the storm of agitation will soon blow over, and we shall see a healthier state of things.

“If you see dear Frank, give his father’s love to him, and tell him I pray for him every day of my life, that he may be an able and successful Minister of the New Testament. May God bless him!

“The Rev. John Chettle, who was as well as usual on Tuesday last, was yesterday consigned to the grave. He was two or three years my senior. May I also be ready! Old as I am, however, I am as much beset as ever for extra work. I must be at York on the

26th, at Scarborough on the 27th, and Whitby on the 28th."

At this Conference Dr. Newton was appointed to the Liverpool South Circuit, which he had left twenty-two years before. Here he remained two years, and then retired upon the Supernumerary list; so that this was the last Circuit to which he was officially appointed as a Methodist Travelling Preacher. He had now attained to the age of threescore years and ten; and although he was stronger both in body and mind than most men are at that age, yet he presented signs of decay, and felt that he was not the vigorous man that he had formerly been.

The failure, however, was only in his physical powers. His faith was as strong as ever; his love to Christ and to the souls of men burned with undiminished brightness; and his susceptibility of grateful emotions was in no degree impaired. During the Conference he had been kindly entertained at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Ingoldby, in Finsbury-square; all the members of whose family duly appreciated his character and talents, and treated him with the high respect to which he was entitled. The nearness of the house to the City-road chapel, where the Conference was held, was to him a great convenience. After he had returned to his family, he sent the following beautiful letter to his friendly host and hostess:—

"Permit me to say, that I have a deep sense of your uniform and Christian attention and hospitality during my late happy sojourn under your roof. Often, very often, do my thoughts travel to Finsbury-square, where I seem again to mingle with your domestic circle. I have attended about fifty annual meetings of the British Con-

ference, and have always been happy in the families where my lot has been cast; but I never was more at home than in Finsbury-square.

“It would not become me, on the verge of threescore years and ten, to look forward to another London Conference; but I do look to the final Conference above, which shall never close, and where I hope we shall all meet to part no more.

“I arrived at Liverpool on Saturday evening, where I found my wife and daughters hard at work, fitting up our new residence. It is very small, but the situation is all that we could desire.

“I opened my commission in my new Circuit yesterday. We had the old Pitt-street chapel overflowing, both in the morning and evening, and a good collection for the Sabbath-schools. I earnestly hope we shall see good days. If we had a great deal more praying, we should have less fault-finding. I find a few of my old friends still here, but others are gone home. Give my love to your dear children, whom may God bless, and also to Mr. Rogers.* The Lord be with you all!”

Before Dr. Newton left Stockport the friends in that place resolved to show their respect for his character, and their gratitude for the benefit which they had derived from his ministry, during the three years of his residence among them, by presenting to Mrs. Newton a handsome portrait of her husband, whom they had rejoiced to recognise as their Minister and Pastor; and for this purpose invited

* Mr. Rogers, who has since died in the Lord, was the father of Mrs. Ingoldby, and the son of the Rev. James Rogers, who appears to have been the first Methodist Preacher that carried the truth to Roxby, where Dr. Newton was born.

him to a tea-meeting, when the artist had finished the picture. The Doctor said he would rather that the gift should be presented and received in private; but the friends would not be satisfied without a meeting: he therefore submitted.

The painting was a half-length portrait, by H. Calvert, Esq., of Manchester, the cost of which was forty guineas, one-half of which the artist generously gave towards the formation of a library and reading-room in connexion with the principal Methodist chapel in Stockport. The meeting was held in the Tiviot-Dale school-room, in the evening of Thursday, September 12th, and was very numerously attended. The Rev. Dr. Hannah presided on the occasion, and was supported by several Ministers and gentlemen. After singing and prayer, he stated the object of the meeting, and pronounced an eloquent and just eulogium upon the ministry and character of Dr. Newton. A letter from Dr. Bunting was read, expressing regret at his inability to attend the interesting service. The following Address, beautifully engrossed on vellum, was then read; having been signed by Dr. Hannah in behalf of the Societies and congregations of the Stockport North Circuit:—

“TO THE REV. ROBERT NEWTON, D.D.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—

“ON the occasion of your departure from the Stockport North Circuit, after three years of ministerial service in it, we very respectfully request permission to tender to you a cordial expression of the affectionate esteem in which we hold both your public and your private character, and of the value which we put upon your services to ourselves and to the Connexion at large.

“In doing this, our regard for your high-toned and exemplary delicacy in respect to anything directly complimentary to yourself, and an anxiety, on our part, not to tarnish our own reputation for honest and straightforward sincerity, by the employment of language which might appear to savour of unseemly adulation, induce us to abstain from anything beyond a barely general allusion to the peculiar talents with which you are so eminently gifted. But we may be allowed, without hazard of rebuke, to express our gratitude to Him who creates the stars of the churches, and holds them in His own right hand, for the evidence which has been given, in your case as in others, of His favour to us as a religious community, and for the benefits which, by His blessing upon your instrumentality, have been so largely conferred upon us; and, glorifying God in you, we cannot but accept this token of His goodness as an encouragement to hope that He will in future graciously continue to raise up amongst us a succession of able and faithful men, who shall be endowed by Him with gifts adapted to the service which the exigencies of our own Connexion, and of the church at large, may be found hereafter to require.

“At the same time, we may also be allowed to record our grateful admiration of the zealous and unwearied readiness with which, from the commencement of your long and honourable ministry, you have devoted ‘the gift which is in you’ to the service of your Great Master, and of ‘the church which He has purchased with His own blood,’ not only in the various Circuits in which you have successively been stationed, but also, as far as circumstances have admitted, throughout the length and breadth of our Connexion, both at home and abroad; and to say that in this

respect you have been 'in labours more abundant,'—though such a testimony is emphatically just and appropriate as a description of the extent to which those labours have been carried,—does not satisfy our own conviction of what is due to you as an acknowledgment of the peculiar and extraordinary services which you have rendered, unless such acknowledgment be farther connected with a grateful recognition, such as that which we now offer, of the disinterested, self-denying, generous, and urbane spirit in which those services have invariably been performed.

“We beg to express, also, our high sense of the dignity, affability, and purity which have uniformly marked your whole character and deportment in the social circle and in your intercourse with general society, as well as in the discharge of all your ministerial functions. And we offer our respectful testimony to the beneficial influence of an example so striking and attractive, on all those who have been in circumstances to observe it, as having been eminently calculated to ‘adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.’

“From the high position in which, by the Providence of God, you have been placed, and from the influence necessarily associated with your talents and character, you have been largely concerned in all the movements and projects of a Connexional character which have occurred during the course of your ministry; and we remember, with satisfaction and gratitude, the active and efficient aid which you have given on all great occasions, especially in the establishment of some of our most important institutions, such as the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Theological Institution, as also in the maintenance of our general economy and discipline. And we concede to you the well-

earned praise of having devoted to these important objects a zeal apparently inexhaustible by any amount of labour, and a perseverance and constancy which no difficulties have been able to discourage.

“In fulfilling some of these departments of service to the great cause with which you are so closely identified, whilst you have not failed to win and to maintain the general esteem and gratitude of the Connexion, you have occasionally been called, in common with others of your honoured brethren, to encounter from certain parties no small amount of misrepresentation and reproach. We may not, at the present, farther notice those who have been unhappily betrayed into the position of being revilers of those whom not only the Connexion generally, but God Himself, we believe, ‘delighteth to honour.’ But, with regard to yourself, we are thankful to perceive, as, amidst the hazards of an almost unexampled popularity, your Christian character and spirit have, by the grace of God, not only been preserved untainted, but even improved and exalted; so, under the new form of trial to which they have more recently been subjected, they shine not merely with an unabated, but even an augmented, lustre.

“We have been naturally led to dwell thus, in the first instance, on your general character and services, because for many years we were acquainted with you chiefly as the general servant of the whole Connexion. But we have now the duty of referring to the nearer and happier acquaintance with you, into which we have been brought by your residence and labours amongst us, as one of our Circuit Ministers, during the last three years. And it affords us the highest satisfaction to assure you, that the exalted opinion which we had previously conceived of you,

as a Minister of Jesus Christ, has been not only sustained, but greatly strengthened, by the more frequent opportunities which we have recently enjoyed of attending on your ministry, and by the occasions on which we have been privileged to unite with you in counsel and in action, in matters having a direct relation to the cause of God in our own Circuit. The steadiness and punctuality of your attention to all your ministerial engagements; the characteristic urbanity of your spirit and behaviour on all occasions; the simplicity, fervour, and ability of your public ministrations; and, above all, the power and unction from above with which, by God's blessing, your services have been connected; have left upon our minds and hearts impressions which we trust will never be forgotten, and which can never be remembered but with the liveliest emotions of esteem and gratitude.

“The general law of the Connexion—to which, in the present instance, we experience some difficulty in yielding a very cheerful submission—now closes that more intimate connexion which has recently subsisted, so much to our advantage, between you and ourselves. But we shall not fail to follow you, in spirit, to your new scene of labour, with our affectionate remembrance and our fervent prayers. Thankful to God that you have been so long preserved in life and health, and that, with the exception of a few slight hinderances from sickness, you have been able to maintain, without interruption, and through so many years, a course so eminently honourable to yourself, and so serviceable to the great object to which your life has been devoted, it is now our united and earnest prayer, on your behalf, to that God whose you are and whom you serve, that the fulness of the Divine blessing may rest on yourself and on your

family; that you may be permitted, for years to come, to continue in that work which has hitherto been your glory and your joy; and that whensoever it shall please Him whom you have so uniformly honoured as the Lord of your life and the theme of your ministry, to call you from His service in the church on earth to the companionship and employment of the church above, the termination of your course may furnish the crowning and triumphant demonstration, and to yourself the glorious reward, of your having walked in that path of 'shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'"

This just and beautiful Address having been proposed by Dr. Turner and Mr. Rigby, the Circuit Stewards, in speeches full of kind and Christian feeling, and adopted by the meeting with enthusiastic cordiality, Dr. Newton, in reply, remarked, that "he could not say that he must bespeak the candour of his Christian friends and their kind indulgence because he was unused to address public meetings; and yet he felt that he was in a peculiar and novel condition that evening. He had never addressed a public meeting under such circumstances; so that, as he had said to some of his friends, he was at a loss what to say, and how to give expression to what his heart felt. Gratitude had been said to be 'the memory of the heart;' and, if that was a correct definition, he should never forget that evening while memory held her seat. If gratitude was 'the memory of the heart,' while the heart beat it must feel. He felt that there was everything to awaken his gratitude on that occasion. To have heard from the lips of Dr. Hannah the sentiments he had kindly expressed, was a call on his gratitude. He owed

personal obligation to Dr. Hannah for having come to preside on that occasion; for having not only given the influence of his name, (and some of them knew how to estimate that,) but also of his different official positions, as the Theological Tutor at Didsbury, as the Chairman of the District, and as Secretary to the Conference. It was a relief to his mind to have such a successor in the office of Chairman of the District, which it had been his own lot to hold for the last six years. He did feel when removing, and his heart seemed to linger as if unwilling to leave the Manchester and Bolton District. But it was a great relief to know that his friend Dr. Hannah had been appointed Chairman of the District. He could not forget, also, that Dr. Hannah was the Secretary of the Conference; and in all these important offices they had his influence on that occasion. And yet, after all, personal friendship was the highest feeling of his heart, in seeing Dr. Hannah that evening where they were all so happy to see him. He was personally obliged, also, to both the Circuit Stewards, for the sentiments which they had so kindly expressed, and to all his friends. He could not say that those eulogistic sentiments had gratified him. He sought not the praise of man. And yet he hoped he knew how to estimate the kind approval and regard of those with whom, for the last three years, he had been associated. He thought it was a very great treasure to have a good name, which was rather to be chosen than great riches.

“He had been asking himself, ‘Why all this?’ Not because he thought he had any claim on his friends; and yet he had been asking himself, ‘Why this expression of kindness?’ And he had answered, that it was a proof

that he had been endeavouring to teach the doctrines of the Gospel of God our Saviour,—the truth as it is in Jesus. That had been his aim and endeavour. He was not conscious that he had intentionally shunned to declare the whole counsel of God; or that he had sought to soften the truth. God was his witness that he had endeavoured, with all simplicity and plainness, to declare the Gospel of the grace of God. He took what had just taken place as an evidence that his friends held those doctrines and valued them. The drawback was, that he had done this so feebly. He was scattering abroad all the week, and had to do as he could, on his return, for the Sabbath. His friends had helped him, and prayed for him. He had administered to his flock the sacraments which Christ had ordained in His church. He had dedicated many to the Lord in holy baptism; and always felt a deep and special interest in the children thus dedicated. And then he had also administered that solemn sacrament, the supper of the Lord. He had one thing to say to his friends in Stockport,—that the number of communicants in their Society far exceeded anything he had witnessed in any of the Circuits in which he had travelled. He would that all were like-minded: it was a good indication of their real evangelical piety. He had felt great pleasure in addressing the Society as such: it was a good old usage. There was a distinction between the church and the world. Another reason which had suggested itself, to account for the present occasion, was to be found in that spirit of unity, concord, and godly love, which distinguished them as a Circuit. He had gone out into other parts, and found fault-finding and strife; but when he got home, he

seemed to have escaped from the storm, and to be in a smooth bay, where all was calm. And he had enjoyed it the more. He prayed that this spirit might abound more and more.

“As regarded that which looked him in the face,” (pointing to the likeness in another part of the room,) “a very solemn thought had risen in his heart. It was what some people would look at when he lay silent in the grave. There might be some who would wish to look at it when he was no more; and if it should serve to remind them of anything beneficial, he should rejoice in the result. As to himself, he should not have chosen it. He had sat to be looked at many times; and, so far as that went, he confessed he had been quite tired. But when he came to sit and stand before the artist for the present picture, his” (the artist’s) “genius and urbanity of manner had made it pleasant. He should think that the artist had succeeded, and that it was one of his happiest efforts. It would be valued by those dear to him, when he was no more among the living in this world.

“As to the kind things which his friends had said about him, they were their sayings, not his. He knew himself better than they did; and, knowing himself as he did, he was disposed, in all sincerity, to lay his crown at the feet of his blessed Saviour, and to say, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ He desired to sink lower and lower still, in humility and self-annihilation, at the feet of Him to whom his ‘more than all was due.’

“There were two friends present” (Mr. Lees and Mr. Smith) “to whom he was under special obligation for providing him a conveyance to the country places in the

Circuit during the three years. He was not a young man, as he once was. Dr. Clarke had once said that he could walk any man in the Connexion, except himself" (Dr. Newton); "but when a man had received his fifty-second appointment, it was different. There was another friend," (James Marshall, Esq.,) "in whose house he had been an inmate for some time on his first arrival in the Circuit; and from himself, and his better self, and his amiable daughters, he had received all kinds of hospitality. And then it had been his happiness to have colleagues who were one in heart with himself. He could enter into the feelings of his friend, Dr. Turner, on the triennial law. He would rather see old friends; and when he was taken away from a people to whom he was really attached, it was painful. But then, it might be overruled for good. He had entered Methodism with that understanding. He felt it as much as he ever did, to leave Stockport, though just appointed to a people amongst whom he had before laboured. He desired that they would remember him where it was the best for them to remember one another,—at the throne of the heavenly grace. They wanted more prayer to sanctify that apparatus of means which they had among them. And he hoped that those commotions which were doing mischief in some quarters would be overruled, and become the occasion of consolidating the Connexion, of uniting the Ministers more than ever, of greater prayerfulness, effort, and zeal for the glory of God and the conversion of souls.

"He was a Wesleyan,—body, soul, and spirit. Still, he held no quarrel with any one else because of different views on the circumstantials of religion. He could say, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ

in sincerity.' But, when a man had been a Minister for more than half a century, no one would suspect him of becoming a turncoat. Methodism had been his deliberate choice; and it was as dear to him as it ever had been. He had been affected by hearing of the death of several old friends,—Jacob Stanley, William Vevers, and the excellent Leonard Posnet; and these things were admonitory to him. There were but two men in the regular work, at home or abroad, who were in it when he began. He expected to die; but he expected also to live where all is life, light, love, harmony, and happiness, without measure and without end. He would charge it on his friends to meet him in that blessed world above. God forbid that any of them should come short, and be found on the left hand! They must go on; he would meet them there, in a better world."

The Rev. Isaac Keeling, in an appropriate address, presented the likeness of Dr. Newton to Miss Emma Newton, in the absence of her mother, and on behalf of the family.

The scene which this happy meeting presented was alike honourable to Dr. Newton and to his friends in Stockport. They admired his temper, his zeal, his effective preaching, his self-denial, his fidelity to the cause of Wesleyan Methodism; for, in respect of that cause, they were one with him in judgment and feeling. In common with himself they had realized the benefits of the system in their personal experience and in their families; and they were too wise to barter a certain good for the airy speculations of rash and misguided men, whose folly was manifest to every one but themselves. As conservatives of the Wesleyan institutions, the Methodists of Stockport were men after Dr. Newton's own heart.

CHAPTER XV.

DURING the first year of Dr. Newton's appointment to Liverpool we observe no abatement as to the extent of his labours. He travelled as much as he had ever done through the kingdom, seldom allowing himself to spend a week-day with his family; and then only when the number of letters addressed to him, requesting his services, had so accumulated, as to require a considerable time to answer them. But whatever applications he received, he kept himself at liberty to attend the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in the beginning of May, and to meet his faithful Irish brethren in their yearly Conference at the close of the following month. His holy cheerfulness was a means of encouragement to the thousands of people who were accustomed to meet him on these occasions.

Such was his improvement of time, that when he took a journey of any considerable length, he usually contrived, in going and returning, to visit several places. In the spring of 1851, in connexion with the Missionary Anniversary in London, he preached at Newbury and Hungerford; and in returning from the metropolis he preached at Wednesbury and Shrewsbury.

At this time the failure of Dr. Newton's health became increasingly manifest. On Monday, March 17th, 1851, he left Liverpool for Staincliffe, in the Birstal Circuit, having engaged to preach in the evening in behalf of the trust-funds of the Methodist chapel in that place. While he was sitting in the railway-carriage he became seriously ill; and when he arrived at the Mirfield station, and there left

the train, many of the passengers thought he was dying. Some of these persons, on their arrival at Leeds and other places, declared the condition in which they had left him ; and the report was soon spread extensively that Dr. Newton was dead. Connected with his seizure was another event, which is worthy of special record, as indicating the watchful care of Divine Providence. Dr. King, a medical practitioner, of Morley, near Leeds, had occasion on that day to visit Bradford, and intended to take the train at the Morley station for Leeds, but arrived too late. He then determined to go to Bradford by way of Mirfield, where he arrived simultaneously with Dr. Newton, and accompanied him to the house of the Rev. William Dawson, the Wesleyan Minister then resident in that neighbourhood ; the Doctor at that time having all the appearance of a dying man. The complaint appears to have been a severe bilious affection ; and at one time apoplexy was seriously apprehended. Medicine was administered, and other appliances were used, without delay ; and these were accompanied by the blessing of God, so that the most alarming symptoms disappeared. Dr. King remained with him till the last evening train, and came to see him the next morning, when he found him convalescent. He acted with the utmost kindness and promptitude ; yet he absolutely refused to accept any fee, his generous mind finding an ample recompense in the thought, that he had been the means of affording relief to a man who was so highly esteemed, and whose life was of such inestimable value.

Through the whole of this anxious scene Dr. Newton displayed the utmost calmness, fortitude, and even cheerfulness ; for to his sanctified mind the apparent nearness of the eternal world was no occasion of terror and alarm.

Having returned home, he sent the following letter to Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, at whose house he had been entertained during his brief but severe illness. This beautiful effusion of a devout and grateful heart bears the date of March 24th:—

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

“I CAN never forget your great kindness to me in the time of need. The events of last Monday I shall ever regard as specially providential. That I was enabled to get to the Mirfield station,—that Dr. King should have just arrived at the same time,—that I should have been conveyed to your house, where I met with such attention, care, and generous hospitality,—and that the severity of the attack so soon subsided,—surely this was the Lord’s doing; so that, while I am thankful to the instruments, still I must say, and you will both unite with me in saying, ‘To God’s name be all the praise!’

“I got home on Friday morning, to the great joy of my dear wife and daughters, who, notwithstanding my letter, had heard very alarming reports respecting me. I took my regular work yesterday, according to the Plan, without difficulty or inconvenience. I believe, however, that I am resolved to take Dr. King’s advice, as to abstaining from solid food in the evening, and also to restrict myself to less work. With respect to this all my friends here say, ‘So let it be.’

“My earnest prayer to God is, that this visitation may be sanctified, so that I may be a holier and a better man; and that, if it shall please the blessed Master to spare me a little longer to work for Him, I may be a more useful Minister of the New Testament.

“And now I believe all I can do is to tell the Master of your kindness to His unworthy servant. My dear wife begs to unite with me in Christian love to you both, with her best thanks for your kind attention to her husband. Love to the dear children.”

A few weeks after his visit to London he received intelligence of the death of his sister Ann, for whom he had through life cherished a respectful and tender regard. They entered at the same time upon the enjoyments and the conflicts of the Christian life, and carried on a correspondence for many years. Her husband died at Thorpe, near Whitby, December 2d, 1838; and she died at the same place. On this occasion Dr. Newton wrote to his brother Francis under the date of May 21st, 1851:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER FRANCIS,—

“I MUCH regret that I cannot attend the funeral of our dear sister Ann on Friday. Sister John is now no more; and in the morning I inter the mother of ——. What dying worms we be! But there is a world where there is no death. For that world may we live, and there may we all meet to part no more! I can scarcely realize the idea, that I can never, *never* see dear Ann again on earth; but we shall recognise each other in heaven. God be with you! My wife and daughters join me in love to you all.”

To another friend, whose name does not appear, he addressed the following letter at the same time:—“And is my ever-dear sister Ann no longer an inhabitant of this world? And is she now for ever beyond the reach

of pain and sorrow? And has she lingered into life? Of her everlasting happiness no doubt can be entertained by any one who knew her character, and her faith in the truth of the religion of Jesus Christ.

“How many recollections rush into my mind when I think of her! Our childish days, our riper years, our old age! But she is gone, and I am left behind. But we shall meet again!

“I am greatly obliged by your kind attention to my beloved sister, and for your kind letters. I regret that I cannot be at the funeral. We are in the midst of the District-Meeting. With mournful love to all.”

Mrs. Ireland was a woman of strong and cultivated intellect; of deep and earnest piety; dignified in her demeanour; and, like her brother Robert, and the other members of the family, inviolable in her attachment to Wesleyan Methodism.

Under a tender sense of this bereavement, Dr. Newton repaired to the Irish Conference, preaching at two or three places in Wales on his way. From Dublin he addressed the following letter to Mrs. Newton, under the date of June 23d:—“We had to contend with a strong head-wind the day I left you; so that it was time for me to be in the pulpit when we landed at Carnarvon. The following day I preached twice at Holyhead; and on the Saturday morning I was up soon after four o’clock, to take the Government steamer for Dublin. We had a good passage, and I arrived in time for a good dinner and a hearty welcome in Mountjoy-square. Yesterday we had two large congregations in the Abbey-street chapel. I preached with freedom, and I hope good was done. At ten o’clock this morning I set off for Belfast,

where I am announced to preach this evening, and where I hope to arrive by six o'clock.

“After a long and tedious day of travelling from Dublin to this place (Belfast), I arrived in time to preach in a large chapel, and to a large congregation. I thank God, my strength has been proportioned to my day. I hope we shall have a good Conference. Take care of yourself, and may God take care of us all!”

The British Conference was this year held in Newcastle; and Dr. Newton, after attending several of its Preparatory Committees, went to pay his accustomed visit to Derby, of which he gave Mrs. Newton notice in the following letter, which bears the date of July 26th:—
“This is Friday evening; and in the morning I set off, God willing, for Derby. Mr. Turner is not here: so I must travel the long journey as well as I can.

“We have had a hard week, meeting early and late, but have done our best, and without an unkind word or temper; so that, if you had been here, I think you would have approved.

“I am greatly teased by invitations to preach anniversary sermons in the different towns of this vicinity; but do not intend to take extra service. From all I hear, Dr. Hannah is likely to be our President. I devoutly pray that the Lord will direct our way in this and all other appointments.

“I see many of my brethren, like myself, are getting and looking old. Well; you and I have had our day, which, though it has had some clouds, has had more sunshine than multitudes are permitted to enjoy. Let us therefore thank God, and take courage, not doubting that the evening of our life will be useful and happy.

I hope we shall live to see all our children converted to God. This was my father's wish and hope respecting his children; and it was realized before he exchanged earth for heaven. Let us continue to pray for and expect the same. The Lord hear us when we pray! If I be spared, I shall greatly enjoy the blessings of sweet home after the Conference."

After the business of the Conference was begun, he addressed her again, under the date of August 4th:—"Yesterday was a high day in this town. Dr. Hannah's sermon in the morning was most evangelical, and full of unction. In the evening I had to preach in the Blenheim-street chapel. The Lord was with me. The young men who are to be ordained on Wednesday, are giving an account of their conversion and call to the Ministry. The Lord is yet with us, and is our glory in the midst of us. The agitators are in the town, doing all they can to harm us. My advice is, that we mind our own work, and not even say, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' Truth will yet triumph.

"You will see in the 'Watchman' newspaper an account of Dr. Bunting's resignation of his public office, as Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and of the acceptance of his resignation, moved by Mr. Farmer, and seconded by your husband. The friends say a like scene they never witnessed. He is infirm in body, but very devout.

"Write frequently to me. To see your handwriting, amid a heap of letters presented to me, is most grateful. Forgive an old husband, with the weight of seventy years upon his shoulders. My health, I thank God, is good. I retire early to rest, and my dormitory is almost as

large as the whole of our house put together. This I find to be a great advantage. The Lord be with you all!"

At this Conference, Dr. Newton received an appointment, a second year, to the Liverpool South Circuit; but he had no longer the bodily vigour of which he had through life been so remarkable an example. In the course of the year he experienced an occasional difficulty in breathing, and his strength gradually declined: it was therefore apparent both to himself and his friends, that his wonderful career of active service was hastening to its close; a fact which deeply affected many thousands of persons, a large proportion of whom had for years been edified and delighted by his speeches and ministry. Their feeling of sorrow did not express itself in the utterance of unavailing regrets, nor merely in tears; for the Wesleyan Methodists are an affectionate, a grateful, and a generous people; and they felt that two such men as Dr. Bunting and Dr. Newton, on retiring from the public work in which they had been so long and so usefully employed, ought to receive some token of public respect which to them should prove a substantial benefit in the decline of life; and especially that they should be exempted from the inconveniences which arise from an insufficient income. They had devoted their eminent talents, through a long life, to the interests of Wesleyan Methodism, both in its home and foreign departments, and had rendered such services to it, as few other men had rendered since its venerated Founder passed to his final reward. It was therefore proposed to raise a fund which would be sufficient to secure to each of them an annuity for life. It was recommended, that the fund should be denominated "the Testimonial Fund;" for it was to be a declaration of respect for the

distinguished men in whose behalf it was raised ; and when they should be placed beyond the need of all human aid, the fund was to be applied to the support of the Wesleyan Missions, and of aged Ministers and widows. The annuity granted to each of these venerated servants of Christ was not to be less than one hundred pounds *per annum*, nor more than two hundred.

The scheme was originated at the time of the Newcastle Conference, by friends convened from various parts of the kingdom. A Committee was at length appointed to carry it into effect. Messrs. Farmer and Heald undertook the office of Treasurers, and Mr. Edward Corderoy, of Lambeth, that of Secretary. The concurrence of the eminent men whom it was intended to honour and to benefit was, of course, requested. Dr. Newton's answer, addressed to Mr. Corderoy, was as follows :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—

“I HAVE received your kind and Christian letter, and hasten to acknowledge its reception. Of the meeting of the lay friends in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and of subsequent movements, I knew nothing until I saw the announcement in the ‘Watchman.’ When, in 1799, I entered the Wesleyan Ministry, I had no regard to pecuniary considerations whatever. I coveted no man's silver or gold ; and having had ‘food and raiment’ up to the present time, therewith ‘I have been content.’ I have, indeed, had some flattering offers from some other quarters, which, had they been accepted, would have greatly augmented my temporal supplies ; but I never could hesitate for one moment : being sacredly pledged to Methodism, ‘the vows of the Lord were upon me,’ nor had I any wish or desire to be any

thing but an humble, faithful, useful Wesleyan Minister. It is, however, very gratifying *in these times* to see such a Testimonial furnished by the true-hearted friends of Constitutional Methodism. That it is a *United* Testimonial is to me still more agreeable, as it will transmit my unworthy name to posterity in connexion with that of my beloved friend and coeval in public life, Dr. Bunting. With cordial consent to what is proposed, and with many thanks to your excellent Treasurer, to yourself, and the Committee, &c., I am

“Yours most truly,

“ROBERT NEWTON.

“*Burton-on-Trent, September 30th, 1851.*”

Dr. Bunting's answer was equally grateful and Christian in its tone and spirit.

The project was no sooner laid before the Methodists generally, than it met with a hearty response; so that the fund was collected with comparative ease. England, as was fitting, supplied the bulk; Scotland sent its contingent; Wales contributed; Ireland excellently helped; the Channel Islands were represented; France was found in the list; the East and West Indies did not withhold their aid; South Australia was early associated with the effort; and even Shetland added to the amount.

In the month of March, 1852, there was a meeting in London of the leading friends of Methodism from all parts of the land, for the purpose of consultation on Connexional affairs; and, as many of the subscribers to this fund were present, it was proposed that they should assemble in the Centenary Hall, in the evening of the 16th, to receive a report of the amount contributed, and to determine what

future measures should be adopted. The attendance of the two Doctors was respectfully requested. The following are their replies, addressed to the Secretary :—

“ SEACOMBE, *March 8th*, 1852.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—

“ I HOPE to be with you on the evening of the 16th instant, to meet those friends who have given such a practical and generous expression of regard to my dear friend Dr. Bunting and myself. I have had a severe attack of influenza, but am much better. My cough, which was distressing, is entirely gone. My physician, however, tells me I must greatly abridge my labours, or they will soon terminate. I must bow to the indications of Divine Providence, and submit myself unto God: probably I shall soon have to retire into some corner, where I must try to do a little work for the blessed Master as He shall enable me. I am in good hands, and can say, ‘Father, Thy will be done.’ With hearty love and gratitude to all, I am

“ Yours most truly and obliged,

“ ROBERT NEWTON.”

“ 30, MYDDELTON-SQUARE, *March 10th*, 1852.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—

“ I MOST heartily thank you for the favour of your two gratifying notes, received on Friday evening and this morning. The so speedy and gratifying completion of the plan for a United Testimonial to Dr. Newton and myself, would, under any circumstances, have afforded to me a grateful surprise; but, under the actual circumstances and position of our Connexion, is really wonderful,

and excites emotions of no ordinary thankfulness to God, and to our kind friends in general, and especially, allow me to add, to the Treasurers and to yourself for your successful prosecution of the scheme.

“I shall feel it my pleasant duty to attend to your kind summons on Tuesday evening, the 16th instant. I have, indeed, no aptitude for engagements of a ceremonial or complimentary character, however interesting may be the occasion, and my nature and habit make me unaffectedly shrink from them. But I feel that it would be an injustice to my own deep sense of obligation, as well as to the kindness of my friends, if I were, from any personal disinclination, to decline meeting them on such an occasion as this. I am greatly relieved and encouraged by learning from your last communication, that my dear friend Dr. Newton intends to be present. I am sure that he, by the blessing of God, will give that utterance to our common sentiments, for which neither my powers, my state of voice, nor my feeble and still failing health at all qualify me. I trust that your own health is somewhat better. Praying that it may be fully restored and long spared, I am, with much respect and affection,

“My dear Sir,

“Your obliged and faithful friend,

“JABEZ BUNTING.”

The meeting at the Centenary Hall was numerously attended, and was eminently an occasion of holy joy. Mr. Edward Corderoy set forth, in an eloquent and beautiful speech, the extraordinary services of the honoured men in whose behalf the friends were then assembled, and proposed the following Resolutions:—

“First: That the members of this meeting desire to express the high admiration and esteem with which, for many years, they have regarded the character, talents, and public services of the Rev. Dr. Bunting and the Rev. Dr. Newton. In doing so, they would first offer their devout thanksgiving to Him who has ‘the stars in His right hand,’ for the favour of His having given, and for more than fifty years preserved, to the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion, two Ministers so eminently gifted. They would, in the second place, tender to these distinguished Ministers their affectionate congratulations on the high position they have so long and honourably occupied, and on the important service which they have been the instruments of rendering, not only to the Connexion which rejoices to claim them as peculiarly its own, by the elevation of their character, their evangelical and powerful ministry, and their unwavering maintenance of the great principles involved in the doctrines and economy of Wesleyan Methodism; but also to the church of Christ in general, and to the world at large, by the lustre of their talents and virtues, and by their unwearied advocacy of evangelical enterprise and universal charity. Next, in contemplating their advanced age, and the comparative retirement from active service which declining health may render necessary, the members of this meeting, while bowing in submission to the Divine will, would indulge themselves in a chastened intimation of the mournful regret which tinges, though it may not darken, the better and brighter feelings which, in the review of the grateful past, and still more in the prospect of the heavenly future, are appropriate to this occasion. And further, the members of this meeting unite in earnest prayer to

God, on behalf of these His beloved servants, that they may be long spared to give the benefit of their influence and counsel, and also, as far as may be, of their public ministry, to the Connexion which they have so greatly served and honoured; that their declining years may be enriched with that 'comfort of the Spirit' which has been so largely, through their instrumentality, dispensed to others; and that the conclusion of their work on earth may bring to them the glorious recompense of an abundant entrance into 'the joy of their Lord.'

“Second: In accordance with the preceding Resolution, the members of this meeting gratefully acknowledge the liberal response which has been given to an appeal made by certain Wesleyan laymen for contributions to a United Testimonial Fund, with a view to a suitable provision for the retirement of the two Ministers in question, and for the circumstances of certain members of their families; and now hereby very respectfully request the Rev. Dr. Bunting and the Rev. Dr. Newton to accept, as the result of such contributions, an annuity for life of £200, to be payable to each of them respectively, from the date of their ceasing to receive the usual ministerial stipend, together with the assurance of a reduced annuity after their decease to their unmarried daughters, to be continued so long as each of these daughters severally shall live and remain unmarried.”

Mr. Garland, of Redruth, and Mr. Falconar, of Newcastle, in appropriate speeches, supported the Resolutions, which were carried unanimously.

The whole audience then rose, and Mr. Farmer, the Chairman, presented to each of the venerable Doctors a copy of the Resolutions beautifully written on vellum; remarking

that the pecuniary provision was not to be regarded in the light of a compensation, or even as an acknowledgment, but as a spontaneous offering for services which it was impossible to appreciate on monetary principles.

Dr. Bunting said: "Mr. Chairman, and Christian friends, and—as the Chairman happily appended to his introductory remarks—Methodist friends, you may easily conceive under what a tumult of feeling I have been labouring ever since I entered this room, and under what a tumult of feeling I must be labouring at this moment. I have, no doubt, many faults; I am conscious of them, and of the manifestation of them during one or other period of my life; but I think I was never ungrateful, except to God. My heart readily, warmly, thankfully responds to every feeling and every manifestation of kindness. You see, I think, from the glimpse you have of me, that I am not in a condition to do justice either to my own feelings, or to your kindness. I labour under great infirmity. Long may it be before my beloved friend, Dr. Newton, is exercised with the same kind of infirmity! I labour under a great infirmity of memory. But I am thankful to say, that, when a subject or proposition of any kind is laid before me, and a statement made, I am as able to comprehend it, and, for the time being, to exercise my mind upon it, as I ever was. This is a mercy which I may appreciate. But I do labour under great infirmity of memory. I feel that I cannot apply my mind to the delivery of sentiments whose enunciation would occupy much time. If, therefore, I should on this occasion attempt the expression of that which my heart feels, I know that I should break down. I labour under great infirmity of voice also. Long may my friend be kept from this infirmity! In addition, I

labour under an infirmity arising out of the humiliating feeling with which I have listened to the many kind observations, in reference to me, which have just been made. I am humbled before God. I must not, however, do injustice, or offer discourtesy, to the friends who expressed those kind feelings, by saying how much they have exaggerated any claims I may possibly have upon their kindness, because love is very prone to exaggerate, and I take that very exaggeration as a proof of their love and regard. I think we have, in the apostolic writings, some instances of exaggeration which those whose hearts are rightly influenced may, under certain circumstances, fall into. Therefore, I thankfully, gratefully, and yet very humbly, accept of this kind offering. I thank you, my Christian friends, who have been contributors to the United Testimonial. I do not affect to deny, that it is very acceptable to me. I do not affect to conceal that it is gratifying to me,—in many respects beyond my power of expression. I thank you. It is comfortable to know, at the close of life, at the termination of all these conflicts and agitations, that one stands well in the good opinion, if not of the whole of our fellow-men, at least in that of our fellow-Christians and fellow-Methodists. You have been kind enough to overlook many things on which you might have found occasion to animadvert, and, on many occasions, you have taken the will for the deed. It is gratifying, especially, after the circumstances to which my friend Mr. Farmer has alluded,—after so many attempts at vituperation and misrepresentation, of which I am not now going to complain. I can make allowance for difference of judgment, and difference of views, and the different aspects in which one is contemplated; but still the fact is the same. I have had,

with my friend, to pass through 'evil report and good report;' but it is gratifying to know that you, Methodists, acquit me. You may think that I have been mistaken, but you think that I have been honest; you think that I have intended well; you think that it is not from a want of tolerable consideration that I have taken the course I have. I thank you for this. There are some to whom I think it right to express my particular acknowledgments: I refer to my esteemed and honoured friends, the Treasurers and Secretary, as well as to the Committee with whom they have been associated, and in conjunction with whom they have acted. I am sure that success is mainly attributable to their influence and ability, and I hope they will allow me to thank them. I should have been happy to convey these thanks to the co-Treasurer, as well as to yourselves; but as he is not with us, perhaps Mr. Farmer will convey to him these acknowledgments. Above all, however, I thank God. On a somewhat similar occasion, which took place in Newcastle, in the Committee of Review, when most affecting expressions of kindness had been addressed to me, I could not help exclaiming, in the fulness of my heart, 'Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me, even me, hither, and placed me in such a position of privilege and honour?' I say so to-night; and give to God the glory. It is no small mercy, after fifty-three years of public life, to be able to preserve such a conscience for one's-self, and such a reputation as that there should have been no stain, no shame, felt by those with whom we have been acting, but they still look upon us as their friends, and the objects of their esteem. It is the Lord's doing: He keepeth the feet of His saints: and I give the glory to His name. I must

also take the liberty of thanking those of my brethren in the Ministry who, notwithstanding the intimation that they were not desired to take any part in the matter, have put down their names, and otherwise materially forwarded the plan. I hope they will accept this acknowledgment, as it may be almost my last opportunity of testifying my strong, grateful, affectionate regard, not only for the Methodist people, but also for the Methodist Ministry. They are a godly set of men. I have known as much of them as most people. They are not angels; but many of them are as angelic as most Ministers; and they are earnest in doing the will of our Father in heaven. They are entitled to the esteem and affection of our people; and they have, during the course of a long life, by many acts of kindness and indulgence, entitled themselves to mine. With reference to the Testimonial itself, there are so many gratifying things in connexion with it, not only as to the spirit, but as to the mode and plan adopted, that I must beg leave to express the entire approbation of my own judgment as to every part of the plan. I approve of the object to which the reversion of this fund is devoted. Perhaps, there may be some little difference of feeling about that; but to me it is a strong ground of satisfaction, that you have thought of our Methodist Missions. In the providence of God, I am now cut off from taking any active part in this great movement, but I cannot but feel deeply and permanently interested in them. I am glad, therefore, that when I am dead and gone, and when my not quite immortal, but ever-green friend, Dr. Newton, is gone, that the Missionary cause will be ultimately benefited by a part of the rever- sionary interest of this Testimonial. Of course, I feel equally gratified that a portion of that reversion will be

devoted in perpetuity to those who, like myself, may become superannuated, and to their widows. How many have I known, pious, excellent men, who lived and laboured, and were giants in their days, that have left behind them widows, who have certainly a strong claim on the grateful recollections of those with whom their partners lived and died ! I approve of that part of the arrangements ; and I do not know of what part I do not approve : there must have been some wise heads as well as warm hearts engaged. I thank you for what has been done and said, but especially for what has been felt ; for the doing in this matter is chiefly valuable on account of the feeling from which it emanated. I wish for yourselves and your families all temporal and spiritual prosperity. I pray that upon our Society in all its arrangements, upon all our officers, and upon all our members, as well as upon all their Ministers, a copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit may take place. That will wonderfully put everything right. None of us wish to establish what is wrong. Let it be pointed out to us, and shown that it is a wrong, and we shall rejoice to have it removed. I do not think that in our Society there exists so much wrong as some people imagine. I think that many things which are wrong, arise from something defective in our own Christian feelings either towards God or one another. I am steadfastly attached to Methodism in all its essentials, as well to its discipline as its doctrine ; to its whole economy, by which purity of doctrine, purity of morals, and sound Christian experience are maintained and perpetuated. The Report intimates that I and my friend have been servants, not merely to Methodism, but to the church of Christ. That is a feeling which I have always cherished. I am a firm Methodist, a decided

Methodist, and I think I have a right to be so; but I am more a Christian than I am a denominational Methodist, or a denominational anything. ‘Grace, mercy, and peace to all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!’ Throughout the whole of my public life I have endeavoured to maintain this as my predominant feeling, and, whenever opportunity served, to manifest that it was predominant. Excuse my imperfections in speech and in language. If I could, I would gratify you as much as Mr. Corderoy and Mr. Garland have gratified me: it is not, however, in my power, and you will accept the will for the deed.”

Dr. Newton next addressed the Meeting: “Mr. Chairman and Christian friends, I find myself at this moment labouring under feelings which entirely incapacitate me from addressing you,—in circumstances perfectly novel,—a position, in the like of which I never before found myself. What shall I say? What can I say? I am called upon to acknowledge the liberality of my kind and generous friends in various parts of the Connexion, at home and abroad, and to acknowledge the kindness of not a few of my dear and honoured brethren in the holy Ministry, who have contributed so generously to this Testimonial. Now, were I to say, that I deeply, gratefully, feel my obligation to you, I should speak words of truth and words of soberness; but I know that human lips are dust, that human words are air, and therefore my friends must give me credit for feeling—deeply feeling—thanks I cannot speak. Language is imperfect. No arrangement of language that I could form at this moment could adequately body forth the feelings of gratitude which beat in this bosom. On my part, this has been altogether unlooked for. I have

laboured for nearly fifty-three years in the work of the holy Ministry, in the Wesleyan Connexion, and I never wished to be in any other; but I never laboured with respect to anything of this sort. Brought to the enjoyment of Divine truth by Wesleyan instrumentality, I gave myself early to the Lord; and from my nineteenth year to this day, I have been honoured with a place among Methodist Preachers; and I think that up to about a few years ago, during the whole time of this ministry, I had not been absent from my duties through indisposition, more than four or five Sabbaths. With so great an amount of physical strength had I been favoured by Divine Providence, that my work was never any fatigue to me. For forty years I never knew the meaning, by personal experience, of the word 'tired.' My work, therefore, was my delight. But I never had any idea of such an occasion as this. When I heard of the movement, I was greatly surprised; yet I thought within myself, that it originated spontaneously, and without any hint, directly or indirectly, I am sure, from myself; and I considered that I was getting an old man, and that though my health had been so hale and vigorous, yet dark days would come. I knew further, that I had never saved one shilling from Methodism in my life; and that any little income I have had, has annually gone in the service of Methodism. I may say now, at the close of a public life, 'I have coveted no man's silver or gold.' Never, never! Having had food and raiment, therewith I have been content. I have been permitted by the good providence of God to continue in the regular Circuit-work nearly fifty-three years. This is a loud call on my gratitude to Him whose I am, and whom I serve. But I

am free to confess, that what my kind friends have now done relieves my mind from any solicitude respecting the days of feebleness which I know, if I live a little longer, will come; and to have the comforts of life in one's declining years is a great mercy. I do not undervalue the generosity of my numerous friends. Then it has been a very cheering thought to me,—and the circumstance has been suitably alluded to by my dear and honoured friend" (Dr. Bunting),—"that when we are gathered to our fathers, a considerable accession will hereafter be made to valuable funds. From this undertaking the old Preachers, and the widows of those who have gone before, will be benefited, and also the Mission cause, so dear to this heart for so many years. I have been told, that I do not know how to say 'Nay,' when called to advocate the cause of Missions. I do not wish to say 'Nay;' and if I should be the means in any way of forwarding that cause, I am sure I should feel grateful to the God of my life. Another remark: It has been stated that my honoured friend and myself have been coevals. It is true we came out in the same year, and we have held on side by side nearly fifty-three years; and I do not think that during the whole period we ever exchanged a shy look. I do not know that we ever entertained an unpleasant feeling,—that we ever had a cold thought towards each other. You know with what ability my excellent friend has exerted himself to promote the interests of Wesleyan Methodism, both at home and abroad; and I am free to confess, that, after all this, the very idea of my unworthy name going down to posterity coupled with that of my dear and honoured friend, excites in my mind inexpressible feelings. Pleasant in life, in death we shall not be divided.

I beg all my friends to accept my warmest thanks. I shall never forget my obligations while memory holds her seat. Then as to the great cause with which we are connected: I have no fears respecting its future, if we steadily abide by our first principles. Maintain that system of Christian theology to which we have subscribed, handed down to us by our venerable Founder; and maintain that state of discipline which he enforced; and the system which has made us what we are, will make us more than we are! After seeing the well-working of Methodism for so many years, I should be jealous of touching the ark of God. Anything like an organic change we must not make, and by the grace of God will not make. If any modifications can be made, which will not injure the cause, and which are calculated to render our laws more simple, I shall be thankful; but I hope that no modification will be made for its own sake alone. I think that there is very little we can do to improve that system which has been working well so long. It has not lost its energy. In a hundred years its vision has not become dim, nor is its natural strength decayed; it can still do what it has done: let it have free course, and it will yet spread more and more. I have no fear of its sinking into oblivion. Some people say, 'Methodism has done its work; it has had its day.' I believe that Methodism has not had its day, and that the church of Jesus Christ cannot afford to lose such an instrumentality. Although Methodism has been the joy of my heart for more than half a century, yet I hope I am no bigot. I have been in circumstances of friendly intercourse with Ministers of other denominations, especially with Clergymen of the Established Church; and

I have preached many sermons, and begged hundreds of pounds, for the London Missionary Society. Again I thank you, my friends, for your great kindness; and I pray that the God of our fathers may send His blessing upon you and yours for ever."

The Secretary stated that Mr. Farmer earnestly desired that the United Testimonial Fund should reach eight thousand pounds: towards the sum now deficient of that amount, the Chairman (who would still remain one of the Committee's Treasurers) would not refuse to receive subscriptions, but he had at once generously guaranteed, that eight thousand pounds should be the total amount raised for the purposes of the fund.

The day after this very remarkable meeting, Dr. Newton thus addressed his wife and daughters by letter:—"I was brought safely from Liverpool to the metropolis on the day I left you, and met with a most friendly reception in Finsbury-square. I had a fire in my bed-room, and had a good night. I sat the whole of yesterday in the Committee which I came to attend. At six o'clock the subscribers to the Testimonial Fund assembled. The meeting was very large and respectable. It was opened by the President of the Conference; and Thomas Farmer, Esq., was then called to the chair. Ladies were there. Many speakers addressed the meeting; and things were said of Dr. Bunting and myself, which you will not expect me to repeat. The fund was found to be within six or seven hundred pounds of eight thousand. Before the meeting concluded, Mr. Farmer engaged to make the amount eight thousand pounds. What a man is he! The highest annuity is therefore settled; that is, two hundred pounds *per annum* for each of us.

“The Doctor is very infirm, and spoke with difficulty. I was called to follow. It was deemed a most happy meeting.

“I find that I cannot get excused before Friday morning. The Committee which is now meeting is very large. Friends are present from all parts of the Connexion. The President would call upon me to engage in prayer. Thank God, I felt at liberty. I hope we shall have a most harmonious meeting. The Lord direct and guide us! My friends say that I am a much less man than formerly; but that I look healthy.”

The Annual Meeting of the Liverpool District, of which Dr. Newton was the Chairman, was held this year in the vestry of Mount-Pleasant chapel in that town in the month of May. When the usual question was proposed, “Do all the brethren in this District believe and teach our doctrines?” his name was announced; and he answered, “I know no change, except that, as I draw nearer to the grave, the conviction in my mind becomes stronger, that they are ‘the truth as it is in Jesus.’”

When the inquiry was made, “Do any of the brethren in this District become Supernumeraries at the next Conference?” the venerable Chairman rose from his seat; a breathless silence ensued; and he said, “My work is done. For more than half a century I have been permitted to serve Methodism; but I feel that I must retire from the work of a Circuit: and I do so cheerfully. My Master calls me, and I obey.”

To one of his daughters he thus wrote from Dublin, June 29th:—“We had overflowing congregations on the Sabbath, and a capital collection. Last night we held the Missionary Meeting. The collection was twice as much as

was the collection of last year. Poor Pat cannot help being generous. I think Irish air and Irish fare have done me good."

The British Conference was this year held in Sheffield; and Dr. Newton lodged in the house of Miss Jones, whose father and mother, then in the paradise of God, were long his sincere and valued friends. On the Sunday before the opening of the Conference, he paid his yearly visit to Derby, and in the evening preached with great energy, on Rom. i. 16: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." At the close of the discourse he said, "And now, my dear friends, I have finished my last sermon as a regular Wesleyan Itinerant Preacher." He then briefly sketched his career; and stated the reasons which had forced him to retire from the full duties of his ministry; namely, his failing health, his increasing years, and the sense of weariness and fatigue, to which for upwards of half a century he had been a stranger. He added, that he felt a satisfaction in the thought that his regular ministerial labours should end among a people with whom he had been so long and so closely connected, and to whom he was so strongly attached. A deep feeling pervaded the assembly.

The following extracts from letters which he wrote to Mrs. Newton will throw further light upon his history at this important period:—"July 27th. I thank God, I am quite as well, after all my labour, as I was when I left you. I had a good day at Luton, where the friends have built a large beautiful chapel. At Eaton-Bray I preached twice on the Friday. On Saturday I travelled to Derby, where we had large and interesting congregations on Sunday. I

arrived here on Monday, and attended Committees on that day and Tuesday. The Testimonial Fund was reported by Mr. Heald, and it was unanimously agreed to recommend it to the Conference.

“The Conference began yesterday morning with great solemnity and piety. Mr. Scott was elected the President by a large majority, and Mr. Farrar the Secretary. The subscriptions and collections to the different institutions are larger than they were the last year.

“I have already received invitations to preach occasional sermons, since I came here, which would require twice fifty-two Sabbaths, were there so many in the ensuing year.”

“August 6th.—It is now determined that I shall be a Supernumerary, with the kindest affection and sympathy of my brethren. I preached in the evening of the Conference Sunday, in the Carver-street chapel. Rom. i. 16 was my text; and I am told that I never preached better in my life. I thought you were praying for me.

“The Conference beg that I will now take a little rest, and resume public work as I can conveniently do with it. Invitations crowd upon me; but I must learn to say, ‘No.’ We have had some most delightful public services, and cannot say, as matter of doubtful inquiry, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’ I retire from public work with a higher opinion of the Wesleyan Conference than I ever before entertained. Our reply to the men who wish to revolutionize our system is calm, temperate, and Christian, as you will see when you read it.

“Miss Jones has this day invited Montgomery and Holland, the two Sheffield poets, to dine with us. It was to me, and good Mr. Waugh, most agreeable. Mont-

gomery inquired after you with much Christian affection. He says he loves Methodism, and that Sheffield owes much to it. What a fine specimen he is of an aged Christian man and poet, sanctified by the grace of God!

“It is a call to gratitude to God, that I retire with more respect and affection from Ministers and people than I ever before witnessed. May our last days or years be happy and useful! I have not time to read what I have written. God bless you!”

The following Resolution, which the Conference adopted on the occasion of Dr. Newton's retirement from the full duties of the Ministry, after a union with that body of fifty-three years, declares most emphatically the estimation in which he was held, and the respect which his character and talents commanded:—

“The Conference, having heard, with deep regret, that Dr. Newton finds it absolutely necessary, from the failure of his health during the past year, and from the growing infirmities of advanced age, to retire from the regular duties of our Ministry, cannot allow the occasion to pass without expressing its unaffected concern at the loss about to be sustained in the Connexion, by his comparative cessation from the extraordinary labours in which he has been engaged, for upwards of fifty years, with so great uniformity, energy, eloquence, and success. The Conference records its earnest hope and prayer, that the sanctifying consolations of the Divine Presence may be largely vouchsafed to him in these new circumstances; and assures him that, while he carries with him the testimony of his own approving conscience, in reference to his work and motives, and the favour of Him whom he has so long served, he has also the cordial esteem and grateful affection of his

brethren, and of the people, by whom his evangelical labours have ever been highly appreciated, and by whom the memory of his ministry will be cherished, when, in the order of Divine Providence, he shall have passed to his heavenly rest. While the Conference earnestly hopes that Dr. Newton will occupy his usual place in its annual sittings, and take part in its proceedings, so long as his health will permit, its ardent prayers will be presented to Almighty God, that, amidst the infirmities of years, he may be mercifully favoured with the increase of spiritual strength; that he may yet be permitted to enjoy frequent opportunities of preaching the common salvation; and that the evening of his life may be cloudless and serene, brightened and cheered by the presence of his Lord, and full of confidence, joy, and hope."

The following reminiscences of Dr. Newton, relating especially to this period of his eventful history, which have been kindly supplied by the Rev. William M. Bunting, are equally correct and beautiful, and will form an appropriate conclusion of this chapter:—

"I could never bring myself to believe Dr. Newton a failing, or even an aged, man, until he made his appearance at the Sheffield Conference in 1852. 'Mr. Newton' (the style he was longest and most fondly known by)—in association with the early Missionary services, with chapel-openings of rare joyousness and solemnity, and with an aristocracy of Methodist *Preachers*, who have left no inheritors of their transcendent power—had been the brightest of my school-boy and holiday memories, reaching back over as many as five-and-thirty years. And at the *beginning* of those years he was, as I saw, and as I now recall him, in the full splendour of his

manhood and ministry. And yet, as I had never imagined him young, so neither did I expect him ever to be old in my time, or ever to be any other than the physically 'perfect man' I had always known him. The welcome delusion was first, and at once, dispelled on the evening before the sessions of that Sheffield Conference commenced; when, with emotions, *some* of which I should not choose to express, I observed him, as he entered one of the Committee-rooms, enveloped in his cloak, and quietly took a seat (which he retained to the end of the meeting) close beside the door. In any assembly less engrossed with important business, even the aged would have arisen, and the Princes refrained talking, till he had found his place among them: but here his entrance was almost unperceived; and any eye that wandered that way saw but the noble deportment, the somewhat pensive countenance, and the now undisguised infirmities of him—*miles emeritus*—whose honours, however, were amply accorded on the following morning, on the platform of the Conference. Thereafter, with what tenderness and reverence did I watch his daily walk, with slow step and stooping gait, and leaning on the *envied* arm of his old friend, Mr. Waugh, between the chapel and their Conference-home! Then came—preceded, or followed, by the resignation of his place among the Travelling Preachers—the incident of his persevering demand, on the plea of *weakness*, to be exonerated from his public appointment on the Lord's day. His self-distrust was finally overcome by, I think, a vote of the Conference; and he preached, at Carver-street, that masterly, that marvellous sermon of his on Rom. i. 16, (one of those sermons in which I have always thought that he showed himself by far the

most forceful and effective of all *pulpit*-expositors of Christian evidence,) and preached it with a noon-day clearness, and a mellow glow throughout, that became, yet almost concealed, his age. Truly, while the ear heard him, it blessed him. The whole ministration was one of those which made the solemn assemblies of that Conference, more than of many, to be had in remembrance. But, alas! the effort, as he told me rather mournfully the next day, exhausted him: frequently, during the subsequent sittings, he fell into a sleep, as profound as if he might be now first taking his rest after the labours of a life: and, when I paid him a last visit of respect on the day of his leaving Sheffield, he calmly discouraged the hope I could not bear to silence, that he would be spared to meet his sons and brethren in Conference again, and yet again. Some time before that, I was honoured with an invitation from Miss Jones to meet her guests, together with Messrs. Montgomery and Holland, at dinner. Charming to us all was the religious spirit, the mutual cordiality, the conversation on the good old times of Sheffield Methodism, which seemed to knit the souls of the Preacher and the poet into one,—and which *now* give fresh interest to the fact, that they ‘entered heaven with prayer’ within a few hours of each other. They never met, probably, in the interval. But the day of the farewell-greeting on the hither side of ‘the river’ between Montgomery and his longest and best-loved friend among Wesleyan Ministers is noticed for another reason. It was in private conversation that day, that, on my expressing how deeply one whom he had nursed as a child, and whom he had officially received on trial into the Ministry, had been pained to observe the symptoms of his declining

strength, Dr. Newton stated, that he had never known what it was to be thoroughly and uncomfortably *tired* after his work, up to the very Sabbath on which he completed his seventieth year! On that Sabbath, if my memory serve me, he had travelled, preached, and met classes, rather beyond the limit of his average exertions; and, on his return home at night, a strange feeling of weariness and exhaustion overcame him, which he *seemed* to have marked as the date of his quick descent into the vale of years. The circumstances may not be quite accurately recalled; neither may they be deemed by mere chance readers of his life, outside the wide circle of Robert Newton's *remembering* friends, more deserving of record than some others which those friends will be gratified to find there. But in those for whom chiefly that narrative is written, the prodigy of half a century of 'more abundant' toil and itinerancy in God's cause sustained, through God's honouring aid, without one hour of suffering lassitude; the sudden binding on of the fetters of 'labour and sorrow' at the first step beyond the 'three-score years and ten;' and, indeed, almost any reminiscence of the period, at which 'the sun,' though not yet 'the light' of his setting, began to 'be darkened' over the path of one so dearly beloved and longed for, will excite an interest neither prurient nor wholly unprofitable."

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER his retirement from the full duties of the Ministry, at the Conference of 1852, Dr. Newton fixed his residence at Southport, in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, where he enjoyed the benefit of the sea-breezes; and it was hoped he would live for several years, happy in himself, and a means of spiritual good to others. He had, indeed, lost the vigour of youth, and of his mature manhood; but his intellect was unimpaired, his zeal was as ardent as ever; and the graces of his character were so mellowed, that the public respect for him was rather augmented than diminished. His friends, all over the kingdom, who had long been accustomed to his visits, still trusted that they should occasionally see his face, and hear his welcome voice; for, like Daniel of old, he was "a man greatly beloved." The unhappy men who perambulated the country, speaking evil of him falsely, left his character unscathed; so that applications for his services exceeded, beyond all comparison, his power of compliance.

Under the date of August 31st he thus answered an application to preach in behalf of the trust-funds of the large chapel at Boston, in Lincolnshire:—"My sole reason for the delay has been the hope that I might be able to contrive a day for you. Having half engaged to open the chapel at Laceby, I thought I might be able to unite the two places. I cannot learn, however, when that chapel will be ready, and therefore I am compelled to abandon the idea of being with you. I have just returned from Whitby quite exhausted; and find that I *must* be content to

abridge my labours, and learn to be an old man. Give my love to all the friends, and tell them I must be excused. This mortal story will soon be ended. God grant that it may end well with us all!"

To his faithful friend, Jacob Owen, Esq., of Dublin, who was then on a visit to Harrogate, he says, in a letter of September 23d: "On the last Lord's day I preached in Bristol, both in the morning and evening; and was greatly surprised, and not a little gratified, to see such overflowing congregations, considering how our chapels have been deserted in that city during the last two or three years. The Society there is being restored to peace, and then will follow prosperity. In Cheltenham, on Monday evening, we had a large congregation, and a gracious influence rested upon the people. I was glad to meet my old friend Robert Middleton, Esq., formerly of London, who is now eighty-six years of age. He got to the chapel, and is obviously ripening for a better world; being 'all praise, all meekness, and all love.'

"You see they do not let me sit still. I find, however, that I must be contented to do a *little* work for the blessed Master, as I am able.

"So the noble Duke, 'the hero of a hundred battles,' is no more! Truly a great man is fallen. How soon will this world of shadows vanish! But how delightful are the hopes which our Divine Christianity inspires! I beg to be affectionately remembered to your dear family-circle."

Writing from Derby to Mrs. Newton and her daughters, he says: "Believing that you might read what the newspapers truly say respecting the flood, and fearing that you might hear more than truth and fact would justify, to relieve your minds respecting my safety I have great plea-

sure in telling you that I am here and well. Details I must decline till I see you. I have, indeed, gone, if not through fire, yet through water, deeper, and to a greater extent, than I ever did before, except when I was on the sea. But though other lives have been lost, mine, thank God, is spared. To God's name be the praise!

"We had a good day yesterday at Crickhowell, and I have executed my commission. I would fain hope that good was done.

"I have been nearly twelve hours upon the wheels this day; but am a wonder to myself. I hope for a good rest here to-night. The Lord bless you, and bring us together in due time in health and peace!"

It was hoped, that a state of comparative rest at Southport would serve to recruit his strength; but this hope was disappointed. On the contrary, his feebleness increased, so that his visits to distant places became less and less frequent. His interleaved almanack, which, for many a year, had presented a full page of entries from month to month, now began to present blank spaces. Yet his love of Missions was unchanged; and whenever he could attend a meeting that was convened in furtherance of the cause of Christ among the Heathen, he was ever ready to exert his remaining powers.

Having consented to attend the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, in the spring of 1853, he entered upon his journey, preaching at Crewe, Grantham, and Colsterworth, by the way. From Grantham he wrote to Mrs. Newton, April 25th:—"The good providence of God brought me here on Saturday evening. At Crewe, I was most comfortably entertained by Miss Wood. I found a good fire in my bedroom, as I have also done

here; so that by the kindness of my friends, and the care of a gracious Providence, I have been preserved from all difficulty of breathing. We have had large congregations, and I hope some good has been done. Some of the friends here thought me very much altered in appearance, and were surprised to hear me preach as I did. We go to Colsterworth in what they call a close fly; so that I hope I shall be preserved from cold.

“I am glad to find that the Great Northern line is now open direct to London; but I remain here to rusticate till Saturday morning. I hope it will do me good. Many good wishes have been expressed, and many prayers offered up, in my behalf. Who shall say how much we owe to the prayers of good people? Ours has been a life of mercies: may it be crowned with a triumphant end! I know you will pray for me, that the Lord may specially help me on the morning of the next Sabbath-day, when in the City-road chapel I shall be near the ashes of the sainted dead. O that I may be enabled to say something that will do the people good! Mrs. Hornsby begs to present to you her kind respects, with Mr. Hornsby, who is kindness personified. God be with you!”

On the morning of Sunday, May 1st, he preached in the City-road chapel to a crowded congregation, with a degree of animation which made his friends apprehensive that he might injure himself. His text was Luke xvi. 31: “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” The sermon was singularly powerful and impressive,—worthy of the man and of the occasion. It was delivered from a pulpit which the Wesleys had often occupied, and from which Bradburn, and Benson, and Clarke, and Watson, and

Griffith, and many others, had often ministered the word of life, and whose ashes sleep in the cemetery that is connected with that consecrated spot. With that service his ministry in the City-road chapel ended.

The scene which occurred the next day at the public meeting in Exeter Hall was very affecting. When his name was announced, as the seconder of the fourth Resolution, he rose amidst a spontaneous burst of feeling, the vast assemblage of people, both on the platform and in the body of the Hall, rising in mass, and their plaudits continuing for some minutes. After these had subsided, Dr. Newton, who was very imperfectly heard, said: "I am really very much embarrassed by the superabundant kindness of my friends, both in the Ministry and among the laity. Who am I, and what is my father's house, that my friends should thus distinguish and honour me? It is true, that I owe everything that I have and am, under God, to that form of Christianity which I love above every other in the world,—Wesleyan Methodism. It found me when I was wandering in the woods of the North Riding of Yorkshire, running after the horses and foxes with the dogs; and there I might probably have been running still,—except that I am now an old man,—had it not been for those self-denying, zealous, and devoted Wesleyan-Methodist Ministers, who preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and through whose preaching my own sainted father and mother were brought to a knowledge of Christ and salvation. I will not, I cannot, forget the rock whence I was hewn. If men ask me,—and I have been asked such questions,—‘Why do you continue a Wesleyan Minister? Why do you not come here, or go there?’ I answer, ‘I cannot. I owe everything, under God, to Wesleyan Methodism;

and its adherents have called me forth, and put me into this Ministry. A Wesleyan Minister I am; and, by the grace of God, such will I live and die.’”

He then, with his characteristic readiness and ability, adverted to such topics as the meeting had suggested to his mind. He was happy to see in the chair a gentleman (Mr. Heald) whom he had always found to be the same steady friend and supporter of Missions. He was glad to second a Resolution which had been moved by a Yorkshireman (Mr. Wade, of Selby) like himself. He rejoiced to meet so many of his friends again, not from Yorkshire only, but from all parts of the kingdom. He gathered encouragement from the Report which had been read, as to the financial prospects of the Society. He found, in the flourishing state of the agricultural and manufacturing districts of the country, a reason why all should give liberally in support of the Mission cause; and he thought that the speeches to which they had that day listened must have furnished a new stimulus to liberality in this good work. He then added:—

“Now, Sir, I see some eyes directed to the clock; and I am sure that some persons want to go; but they will not depart with comfort, unless they first have an opportunity to give. They have come to give; and I cannot but hope that this day we shall have a liberal collection. I shall not be permitted to attend many more Anniversaries of this Society. It has been my privilege to attend almost every one, perhaps every one, except that which took place when I was on the other side of the Atlantic. I once heard a Reverend gentleman say on this platform, ‘I am on the dark side of seventy years; and you must not expect much from me.’ I too am on the dark side of seventy; and if I live a few

weeks longer, I shall have been fifty-four years in the Wesleyan Ministry. But I do not like the expression, 'the *dark* side of seventy.' If we are what we ought to be, I should rather regard it as the *bright* side of seventy. It is said, as you know, Sir, that 'the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' I humbly hope and trust that I am then on the bright side of seventy years."

Had Dr. Newton known that this was the last time that his voice would be heard in Exeter Hall, he could not have closed his public advocacy of Christian Missions in a more appropriate manner, than by thus bearing testimony to the power and value of the Gospel, which he was anxious to spread through the lands of the Heathen; declaring how it had reclaimed him in early life from a course of sin and folly, and then in old age sustained and animated him with its bright visions of futurity. Before the next annual meeting of the Society his spirit had entered into the joy of his Lord.

For many years he had been accustomed, soon after the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in Exeter Hall, to direct his way to the Irish Conference, where he was always a welcome visiter. He loved the Irish Preachers, and they loved him, with a pure heart fervently; but this year his place was empty in their assembly. The voice which had so often instructed them, and cheered them onward in their course of duty, they heard not; and the face which had so many times beamed upon them in kindness and sympathy, under all their discouragements, privations, and labours, they no longer saw. His infirmities rendered his attendance impossible; but his heart was with them, and they had an interest in his prayers.

The following letter, which he addressed to his friend Mr. Waugh, under the date of May 18th, and which is written with a tremulous hand, explains the cause of his absence :—

“I have delayed to reply to your kind letter, in the hope that an improved state of health would justify me in giving you some reason to expect me to be with you in Cork. On Sunday last I attempted two sermons in the large chapel in Bolton, by which I was so completely exhausted, that I remained sleepless till about six o'clock in the following morning. I find I must be content to do *a little* work for the blessed Master, as I may be able. Our mutual friend Dr. Bunting, and others, have conversed with me on the subject of my engaging to attend the Conference in Cork ; and all think I ought not to undertake either the journey or the work required. You will give my love to the brethren when they assemble, saying that my infirm state of health forbids me to hope that I shall be with you. It is very painful to me to be obliged *thus* to write ; but I bow to the will of God.

“And now I must request to be most kindly remembered to my dear friend Mrs. Waugh, and to the other branches of the family whom it is my happiness to know. Whether we shall again be permitted to meet on earth, I know not ; but surely we shall all meet in heaven. I am thankful to learn that the health of the President is much improved.”

The Ministers of the Irish Conference thus feelingly advert to the subject of their disappointment in their Address to the British Conference :—

“With our joy sorrow is mingled. We greatly mourn the absence of Dr. Newton, who for several years was wont

to attend our Conference. We hailed his presence among us as that of a Prince and a great man in our Israel. His revered name will long be embalmed in our most grateful recollections, and will be enshrined in our holiest thoughts and feelings. We would cherish the hope that at our next Conference we shall be privileged with a visit from him. May he now, in his comparative retirement, be cheered and sustained by the presence and abounding consolations of that Master whose he is, and whom he has so long and so faithfully served !”

The English Conference was this year, 1853, held in Bradford, and Dr. Newton attended its sittings with his habitual punctuality, but as a greatly altered man. His noble form bent under the burden of years ; his physical energy was gone ; and he who had so often directed the business of the Conference, as its energetic Secretary, and four times as its efficient and dignified President, was generally silent, and occasionally slept when matters of vital moment were under discussion. At the same time, his spirit was eminently devout, and his personal sanctity impressed every one that was brought into intercourse with him. The Rev. Dr. Beecham has furnished the following beautiful notices respecting his honoured friend at this period :—

“Dr. Newton and myself, with Dr. Hannah, being the guests of our excellent friend, William Walker, Esq., of Bolling-Hall, near Bradford, I conversed with him concerning our Missionary Anniversary of 1854 ; and told him that I knew it was the earnest wish of the Committee, that he should attend the Anniversary of the Society as long as he was able. He referred to the precarious state of his health ; but said, ‘ Well ; as the time draws near, write to me ; and, if I find that I can comply with your request,

I shall be glad to preach in one of your smaller chapels on the Sunday; but you must not depend upon me for anything in the meeting.'

"At that time he was much enfeebled; but he undertook to conduct a Sunday-morning service in the new chapel which was then opened in that town. In reading the Scriptures he experienced considerable inconvenience from the dimness of his sight; but he delivered a richly evangelical discourse with singular pathos and Divine unction. This proved to be his last Conference sermon; and it was worthy of the man, and of the occasion.

"During the month that I spent with him at that time, I had an opportunity of making daily observations upon the temper in which he bore the great change that had passed upon him; and it was, indeed, edifying to mark in his conversation the entire absence of everything that even bordered upon complaint. No air of sadness ever rested upon his countenance; nor did a querulous expression escape his lips. On the contrary, he manifested a calm and uniform cheerfulness, which indicated a mellowness of spirit, and a joyous hope, which every way became the aged Minister, and the heir of glory!"

When he had returned home, after the close of the Conference, he addressed the following letter to Mr. Walker, whose guest he had been during his stay in Bradford:—"I shall not cease to be grateful to Mrs. Walker and yourself for your kind attention to me while I sojourned under your roof. I have attended Conferences in England and Ireland for more than half a century; but never, in any former instance, have I found myself in such agreeable circumstances as at Bolling-

Hall. The place, the family, my companions, the domestic regularity, the religious order, and, indeed, everything, were most desirable. What, then, is the amount of my obligation to those who provided all these accommodations for me? An old Minister, whom I knew, when leaving a family where he had been kindly entertained, said, 'I shall tell the Master of you.' I believe I must do the same. The Ministers who composed the late happy Conference are now gone to their respective spheres of labour; but I trust they have left a blessing behind them.

"I preached here on the Sabbath evening; but the chapel was so crowded, and the heat so intense, that I was perfectly exhausted. I am, however, better for the repose of yesterday. I find that I am no longer the strong man, to whom fatigue was unknown during more than fifty years. Well; let me be thankful for the past, and rejoice if I can yet do a little work for Him to whom my more than all is due.

"My dear wife and daughters beg to join me in grateful regards to Mrs. Walker and yourself, to your whole family-circle, and especially to your excellent mother."

From this time his health declined apace, so that he was not unfrequently confined to his house for several weeks together; yet when he was able, he was a regular attendant upon the house of God, his drooping frame being supported by his staff. It was not often that he could occupy the pulpit; but he took part in prayer-meetings, and was a very devout and attentive hearer of sermons.

In this state of bodily infirmity his heart was still

susceptible of kind and sympathetic feeling, especially towards the afflicted and the sorrowful, of which the following letter is an example. It was addressed to his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ingoldby, of London, who were unexpectedly bereaved of their eldest son, a remarkably beautiful and intelligent child. He had engaged the Doctor's attention at the time of the London Conference.

“ August 25th, 1853.

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

“PERMIT me to offer my most sincere sympathy and condolence on the bereavement which you have been called to sustain. I can scarcely realize it to myself, that the dear boy is gone. But I remember, and so do you, the words of our Saviour Christ: ‘Of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ And we believe the Divine testimony; and are therefore quite sure that the object of your tender affection is for ever safe and happy. Nor can we forget that saying: ‘What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.’ Infinite Wisdom and Love must always act wisely and well; and we must look for grace to enable us to say, ‘Thy will be done.’ Those who are so dear to us, and have gone to heaven before us, should be so many additional ties upon us, binding us to that blessed world, where there is no more death.

“I find myself an old man, travelling down the vale of years: but I thank God for a good hope through grace; a hope which stretches far beyond this vale of tears. All here desire to join me in sympathizing love to you.”

Early in the year 1854 application was again made to Dr. Newton, to take part in the services of the Anniversary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London at the return of spring; and his answer was, that in his present state of health he could make no engagement; but if he were able at the time, he would take a preaching appointment in a small chapel, but that there was no hope of his being able to make himself heard in Exeter Hall.

To those persons who observed the rapid decay of his strength, it was manifest that his public labours must soon terminate; and that it was very doubtful whether his life would be prolonged many months. It is gratifying to find that his latest services as a Minister of Christ were marked by eminent spirituality of mind, and by signal tokens of the Divine presence and blessing. His last sermon was preached in Wigan; and his last effort to serve the Mission cause was put forth in that town, and upon the same occasion. Of these services the following account has been kindly supplied by the Rev. Gervase Smith:—

“Early in the afternoon of Saturday, March 11th, he arrived in Wigan, to attend the Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary, and proceeded to the house of Mr. Joseph Meek, where he had been often and cordially welcomed. His last visit to this town was in October, 1853, to take part in the opening services of a Baptist chapel. A great change had evidently taken place in his health during these five months. There was now a languor in his appearance, which called forth the sympathies of his warm-hearted friends; but he was cheerful, spoke of former kindnesses, and expressed his pleasure at being

once more in Wigan. During the evening he joined earnestly in the conversation, and conducted family-worship. His eminent spirituality of thought, reverence of manner, copious and correct phraseology, and the mellow tones of his voice, are still remembered by those who were privileged to be there.

“The Sabbath came; and the friends anticipated the morning service with especial interest. The commodious and elegant chapel in Standish-Gate was thronged to hear the great and good man once more. He had often preached in the old sanctuary, and had engaged in the opening services of the new one. For more than a quarter of a century he had visited the town at least annually; and each successive visit had increased the anxiety of the people to hear the Gospel from his lips. There was, moreover, a general feeling of fear that his days and labours were drawing to a close. ‘We shall not have him much longer;’ ‘He is sinking fast;’ ‘He will not preach for us many more times,’ were expressions which were uttered by many, who had often been cheered and profited by his ministry. It is not surprising, therefore, that a large congregation assembled from nearly every part of the Circuit. The bend of that noble frame, and the sunken countenance, seemed to throw a shade of melancholy over the crowd as he entered the pulpit. He was heard only imperfectly in the distant parts of the chapel, except occasionally. The text was Matt. xv. 28: ‘Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.’ For an hour was the congregation riveted by the inimitable simplicity and grace of his expositions, and the power

of his appeals. It has since come to the knowledge of the writer that several persons were led by the sermon-to trust in Christ, and realize the forgiveness of sins.

“He had drawn heavily on his physical strength; for, as he left the chapel, he wrapped up his face, and, in a state of exhaustion, leaned tremblingly on the arm of a junior Minister. He reclined in the easy-chair during the afternoon; but would go to the evening service as a hearer. On the Monday he did not leave the house until the time for the public meeting. The Ministers of the Circuit and a few friends met him at dinner, and, in the afternoon, these were joined by the three Dissenting Ministers of the town, who treated him with marked respect. They expressed, in the most friendly manner, their deep regard for his person and character and labours, and a hope that he might be spared for yet many years. His benevolent disposition was seen in a long conversation respecting his past history. He seemed to forget the obloquy and persecution he had endured, and dwelt largely upon the warm and unabated affection of his friends. ‘I have reason to be thankful,’ he said, ‘for the respect and kindness that have been shown to me during a long public life by other Christian communities, as well as my own: but then it is all of the grace of God; and to Him be the glory. It is true, I have loved my Master, and sought to serve Him; but what am I?’

“He was advertised to take the chair at the Missionary Meeting. A large congregation again hailed his presence, and never was the chair occupied with greater dignity. On May 24th, 1819,—the birth-day of Queen Victoria,—he, with the late Revs. Dr. Adam Clarke and Philip

Garrett, was present at the formation of the Wigan Branch of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and, having attended many of its Anniversary Meetings, was well able to speak of its progress and efficiency. He did not, on the present occasion, speak more than ten or fifteen minutes; but most heartily did he express his attachment to Methodism and its great Missionary institute, and also to all evangelical societies. He declared his unaltered conviction that the Gospel is the appointed means for the conversion of the world, and his belief that God would raise up men to preach it in its purity and power. At the conclusion of the meeting, which was one of great interest, an enthusiastic vote of thanks was presented to him for his services; and with this a request that, if spared to the next Anniversary, he would again preside. After acknowledging the vote, he said: 'With regard to the future, we must say nothing. We know not what a day may bring forth. I am getting to be an old man. You see I am not what I once was; for some of you have known me in my better days: but my heart and soul were never more fully in the work.' He then referred to the approaching meeting in Exeter Hall, and playfully remarked: 'My good friends in London say I am booked for life for their Missionary Anniversary; but, then, that is *their* doing, not *mine*.' How little did he, or any of us, anticipate that the occupancy of the chair that evening was to be his last public service on earth; and that at that very meeting in Exeter Hall it would be first publicly announced that he was no more!

"During his stay in Wigan he was exceedingly grateful for the attention which was paid to his personal comfort. Mrs. Meek regarded him with the affection due to a

father. Every want was anticipated, and all the resources of a happy home were made tributary to his happiness. About noon on the Tuesday he gave to all the family, and especially to the children, his parting blessing, and returned to Southport."

The only official duty in which he appears to have afterwards engaged was the baptism of a child. Other Ministers assisted in the service; but he administered the sacred ordinance, and commended the infant heir of immortality to the eternal mercy of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in devout and earnest prayer.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was the intention of Dr. Newton to remove with his family, early in the spring of 1854, from Southport to Easingwold, where he had engaged a house, and purposed to spend the residue of his days. On the 29th of March he left Southport for his new residence, spending a few days at Rotherham on his way, with the family of his late brother Jacob.

He arrived at Easingwold on Tuesday, April 11th; and soon afterwards the Rev. John Rossell, the Superintendent Wesleyan Minister in the place, called upon him to inquire after his welfare, to present his congratulations, and to bespeak his aid and counsel in respect of the Circuit; at the same time expressing a hope that the venerable man would be spared for a considerable time to serve the cause of Christ. He answered, with impressive solemnity, "I thank you, Sir; but my work is done."

It was still hoped that he might be able to attend the Missionary Anniversary in London: his name was therefore included in the arrangements, and information was sent to him to that effect. His daughter replied: "At the request of my father, I write to express his regret, that he cannot indulge the hope of being with you at Exeter Hall on the 30th instant, or of taking any part in the services connected with our Anniversary this year. His health, I am sorry to say, is in a very feeble state; and he is quite unfit to take so long a journey."

Mr. Tetley, a student from the Didsbury branch of the Wesleyan Theological Institution, was then in Easingwold,

supplying the place of a Minister whose health had failed. He also called to see the venerable man who had just come as a resident in the town, and has supplied the following particulars respecting their interview, and Dr. Newton's appearance:—"I was astonished and affected to find him so prostrated in strength, having been accustomed to see him in the pulpit and on the platform in all his vigour. He was in an easy-chair, and it seemed as if an invisible pressure were upon his shoulders, which he resisted by occasional efforts to throw himself back, and by placing his hands upon his knees. A letter was beside him; and pointing to it he said: 'Ah! that letter is for the Mission House. My name is associated in some way with the coming Anniversary; and I suppose it appears about the streets of London to that effect. It is placarded for the last time;' adding, with a deep tone, and shaking his head, 'Yes, for the last time.' Then mentioning the number of years that he had been 'privileged to be present' at the Annual Meeting in Exeter Hall, he said: 'I did hope to add this year to the number; but now there is no probability of it whatever. Not willing to embarrass the Committee at the last moment, by seeking a supply for me, my daughter has just written to say that I cannot go. I have clung to it as long as I could; but now I feel that I must give it up. It is a trial; but the will of the Lord be done.' Then, assuming a more cheerful tone, he said: 'My heart will be there. O yes! my thoughts will be amongst them; but my work is done.'

"I ventured to suggest, as delicately as I could, the satisfaction which he must feel in looking back upon a protracted life spent in proclaiming 'the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,' making allusion to his travels and

labours. He replied, with some degree of vivacity: 'Yes; my life, and a pretty long one too, has been a life of preaching, and of cheerful toil for Christ; but it has been a life of mercy, crowned with loving-kindness. I have travelled much, thousands of miles, in all sorts of weather; and yet God has given me remarkable strength to stand the wear and tear, and all the other vicissitudes of travelling here and there, down to old age. Very few have had such uninterruptedly good health as I have had. Let me be thankful. O how much have I to be thankful for! But still, what have I done? After all my labours, after all my preaching, it is but poor work at the best, that I have done for such a Master; poor work in such a cause. I am an unprofitable servant. I have done that which it was my duty to do.'

"'To-morrow,' said he, 'is Easter Sunday. I shall be one of your hearers.' Feeling a little nervous at the thought, but not wishing to say so, I suggested whether the quiet of his fire-side would not be more suitable for him in his present state of weakness. 'No, no, young man,' said he: 'that will not do. You have nothing to fear from me; and depend upon it, as long as I have strength to carry me to a Methodist chapel, there will I go.' And there on the following morning was the Doctor, engaging with deep reverence and holy fervour in the worship of God. He rose from his seat at the time of singing, but soon sat down again; and after the service he retired slowly to his home, supported by the arm of Mrs. Newton. These indications of feebleness affected the congregation; all of whom seemed to be impressed with the feeling, that he would not long be a resident in this world. This was the last public religious service that he was able

to attend. A fortnight after this he had finished his course."

Nine days after his arrival in Easingwold he wrote his last letter, which shows that he was still intent upon the service of his great Master, though his strength was all but gone. It was addressed to his faithful friend Mr. Turner, of Derby, and relates several touching particulars respecting his present condition.

"April 20th.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"ALL this time I have delayed to reply to yours, that I might know how it would go with me. It is more than three months since I have attempted to write a letter to any one. More than half a year since my sight suddenly failed me, and, for some time, I expected that I should soon become blind. I could not have read a chapter in the Bible for the world; and yet I had no pain or inflammation. Thank God, my vision is now considerably improved; but I get scarcely any help from glasses. My general health has been greatly impaired: I am not now permitted to attempt two sermons on the same day. I have sent back-word to London, Grantham, and all other places where I had contracted engagements. And what can I now say to Derby, which I am loth to give up, after all these years? I believe all I can say is, that if in July I am as well as I am to-day, I may offer you one sermon on the Sabbath, and, if it be thought well, one on the Monday evening. Perhaps you are not aware that we have left Southport, and taken up our abode at Easingwold, near York. Probably my next remove will be to my everlasting home above. While I have any strength

remaining, I wish to try to do something for Him who has done so much for me.

“My dear wife, who has stood all the toil and fatigue of this packing and unpacking, is better than I could have expected, and begs her kindest remembrances to you and Mr. and Mrs. Wedge, together with my daughters. Tell Mr. Brown that I am not now, nor shall I ever be again, the man I was when we were fellow-labourers at Holmfirth. I think I am thankful for the past; and I can trust for the future. God is wise, and great, and good, and can and will conduct everything that belongs to us to an issue that will be for His glory and our benefit.”

An incident occurred in connexion with the sudden loss of his sight, of which mention is here made, that is worthy of special record, as being strikingly illustrative of Dr. Newton's steady confidence in God, and cheerful resignation to His will. When he found himself involved in darkness, so as to be unable to read, he requested to be supplied with pen and ink, that he might try whether or not he could write in a legible manner. Having made the attempt, he delivered up the blotted paper to his family with a smile, the meaning of which they perfectly understood, when they found that he had attempted to write, “The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?”

The closing scene of this great man's life now drew on; and the incidents connected with it cannot be better described than in the words of his daughter Emma, who witnessed the whole, and took notes of every passing circumstance. The following is her affecting statement:—

“On Tuesday morning, April 25th, we assembled at

breakfast, as usual, when my father appeared somewhat better than he was on the preceding evening. He was very cheerful, and conducted family-worship with even more than his accustomed energy. My mother read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and he commented upon it in his prayer; concluding with this sentence: 'In all things may Christ be magnified in us, whether it be by life or by death.' He then repeated the Lord's Prayer.

"Mr. Gill came in after the breakfast, and conversed with him a few minutes; and when he was gone, my father called me, to ask some unimportant question, when I thought there was something unusual in his tone and manner. About half-past nine o'clock my mother summoned me again into the room where he was. He was attacked with paralysis, or what appeared to us partial unconsciousness. Our medical attendant was immediately called in, and about noon my father seemed to rally. Recollection had not returned, or returned very imperfectly; and at two o'clock in the afternoon the attack appeared to terminate in apoplexy. From that time the doctor gave us no hope of his recovery, and intimated that death might be expected to take place at any moment. Mr. and Mrs. Gill were immediately sent for; but the other members of the family, being distant, could not so readily join us.

"Towards the evening my father seemed to suffer greatly from difficulty of breathing. Once he turned round, and said in a feeble voice, 'I cannot breathe. Pray to the Lord for me, that I may breathe.' Soon after my mother asked him, 'Is the Lord present with you, love?' and he was able to reply, 'O yes!'

“During the night he was very restless: a sort of delirium came on, and he talked of crowded Missionary Meetings, and of public services; his mind turning to scenes which had been long endeared to him.

“On Wednesday evening, in answer to an inquiry from my mother, he said that he felt a little better. Mrs. Gill asked, ‘Do you feel Christ precious?’ He answered, in a low whisper, ‘O yes; Christ Jesus attesting and blessing.’ He then said to Mrs. Gill, ‘Pray for a happy exit.’

“About midnight he fell asleep for a few hours, and appeared to awake somewhat refreshed. As Mrs. Gill was leaning over him, he said, ‘God bless you!’ and soon afterwards, ‘I have every happiness. Christ is mine, and I am His. I shall soon be with Him in glory. Christ is my rock.’ She repeated the hymn beginning,—

‘Jesus, the Name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly;’

and when she came to the two concluding verses, he raised his hands, and attempted to say with her,—

‘Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His Name,
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold, the Lamb!’

“On the Thursday morning he took a cup of coffee; and soon after he roused himself, and, as his children kneeled round his sofa, he clasped his hands, and, mentioning each one by name, prayed separately for his daughters, and sons, and sons-in-law; desiring that God would be

favourable to them when he was gone. Again, raising his hands, he said, 'God grant that we and our children, and our children's children, may all meet in heaven!' Then, beckoning to those who were present, he bade each of them farewell. After a short pause, his eye tried to find my mother. He grasped her hand, and feebly said, 'Farewell, my own love!' He then sank back; his pulse fluttered; and for some hours he was unable to converse coherently, unless he were recalled by some passage of Holy Scripture.

"About noon, John Brown, an aged Christian man, having shown himself at the room-door, one of his daughters said, 'Father, here is an old pilgrim come to see you;' to which he answered, 'Let him come in.' The good man stood by and wept; and some one said, 'Pray with us.' He kneeled down. A part of his prayer I distinctly remember. 'Lord,' said he, 'it seems as if Thou wert about to take Thy servant to Thyself; but if it be Thy will, raise him up. Do, Lord.' My father responded to the prayer; but as he took leave of John, he said distinctly, 'I shall not rise again.'

"One of his daughters reminded him of his engagement to take part in the Annual Missionary Meeting at Exeter Hall, on the following Monday; and asked him if he had any message to send to the meeting. He was understood to say,—

'Jesus, confirm my heart's desire,
To work, and speak, and think for Thee.'

He then said, 'Work, work,' and hesitated. She added, 'Work while it is day; for the night cometh, when no man can work.' 'Ah!' said he, 'that is it. Work while it is day.'

“In the evening he desired Mrs. Gill to remain, that she might read and pray with him. She complied, and repeated to him his favourite hymns, and texts of Scripture. Once he interrupted her, saying, ‘I am a happy man! I am a happy man! I’ll praise, I’ll praise.’ One of his daughters finished the sentence for him,—

‘I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath.’

He raised his hand, and smiled, saying, ‘O yes, yes; you are right! Religion in the heart and life. How happy! God is good, and doeth good. God is love. Then if God is love, love is of God; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.’ He repeated this several times. Then, leaning back in his couch, as if he felt his extreme feebleness, and clasping his hands, he said, with a deep hollow voice, ‘I am going to God. I am going to glory soon, soon.’

“At a very early hour on Friday morning, April 28th, one of his daughters brought him some refreshment. As she approached him, he pronounced her name, and said, ‘Happy,—the soul,—peace.’ She answered, ‘The soul is in peace.’ ‘O yes, yes!’ he responded: ‘happy in God, in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. I want to fall asleep. Happy, happy.’ During the whole of that day he appeared to be perfectly recollected. In the morning, Mrs. Gill repeated hymns to him; and at every expression which bore upon his own case, he raised his hands, and gave some sign of assent. Several times he said, ‘In Him we live, and move, and have our being.’ ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions.’ His imperfect utterance, occasioned doubtless by paralysis, often prevented us from catching every word that he meant to express. Of his difficulty in

making himself understood he was fully aware, and often referred to it. Once, in particular, alluding to his long course of public labour, he said, 'I cannot express myself: my voice is gone; my speech is failing for ever.'

"On Friday evening he conversed with more apparent ease than he had ever done since his attack. All his family, with two exceptions, who were unavoidably absent, were at his side. He said to them, 'I am dying; I am dying fast; I shall soon be dead; but whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die. I am the Resur—
———' His daughter again completed the sentence; and he repeated with her, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me shall never die.' 'It is almost done; it is almost over. Praise, glory to THEE!' He inquired for those members of the family who were absent; and when he was asked if he had any message to send to one of them, he said, 'Tell her to live devoted to God.' Mrs. Gill repeated the hymns, beginning,—

'Come, let us join our friends above,
That have obtain'd the prize;'

and,—

'Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain;'

and when she came to the verse,—

'Away, sad doubt, and anxious fear,'

he interrupted her, saying, 'I have no fear, no alarm. Perfect love casteth out fear.' Mrs. Gill said, 'Perhaps you may be in heaven before nine o'clock to-night.' He looked up and said, slowly and calmly, 'I am ready at any time to die.' Turning afterwards to his daughter, he said, 'He that believeth shall never die.' Then

addressing another member of the family, he said, 'Preach from the heart. Preaching that flows from the heart does good every day. Live to God; follow religion in the life and conduct.' He was speaking very rapidly, and in a feeble tone of voice; so that it was difficult to apprehend his meaning. Presently he stopped; his eye lighted up; he raised himself on his pillow, and, with what appeared to those who were present a superhuman smile, he beckoned repeatedly to the further end of the room, bowed, and waved his hand, an expression of the highest rapture resting upon his features; and then, as if in answer to some inquiry, he said, 'I am a Methodist Preacher; an old Preacher; an old Methodist Preacher.' Possibly his mind was wandering, and he imagined himself to be before the gates of the eternal city, with the holy angels full in his sight.

"On Saturday morning he inquired very anxiously after his youngest son. One of his daughters brought him a cup of coffee; and as he took it at her hands, he said, 'Thy prayer for the Church of England;' alluding, it was thought, to the grace after meat which Mr. Wesley uttered upon his deathbed.* She afterwards asked him, 'Have you been praying for the Church of England?' and he answered distinctly, 'Yes.'

"His difficulty of breathing increased; and it was evident that the last conflict was begun, a convulsive shudder passing through his frame with every breath that he drew. Mrs. Gill repeated the hymn, beginning,—

* "We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all Thy mercies. Bless the Church and King; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever." This was Mr. Wesley's constant thanksgiving after meals.

‘ Stand the’ omnipotent decree :
 Jehovah’s will be done
 Nature’s end we wait to see,
 And hear her final groan :
 Let this earth dissolve, and blend
 In death the wicked and the just ;
 Let those pond’rous orbs descend,
 And grind us into dust.

‘ Rests secure the righteous man !
 At his Redeemer’s beck
 Sure to’ emerge and rise again,
 And mount above the wreck.
 Lo, the heavenly spirit towers,
 Like flame, o’er nature’s funeral pyre,
 Triumphs in immortal powers,
 And claps his wings of fire !

‘ Nothing hath the just to lose
 By worlds on worlds destroy’d :
 Far beneath his feet he views
 With smiles the flaming void ;
 Sees this universe renew’d,
 The grand millennial reign begun ;
 Shouts with all the sons of God,
 Around the’ eternal throne.’

“ He made an attempt to speak ; and we could catch a few disjointed sentences ; such as, ‘ I am the Resurrection,—God,—Jesus Christ, the ransom of sinners,—life from the dead,—praise the Lord,—praise Him,—praise Him, all the earth.’

“ In about an hour he sank back exhausted ; his lips moved, as if in prayer ; he folded his hands on his breast ; and was heard pouring out his soul in prayer for his family. By putting the ear close to his mouth, we heard distinctly his dying testimony : ‘ I am going to leave you ; but God

will be with you. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life ; and the life of Jesus is life from the dead. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. By their prayers they shall prevail,—by their prayers and tears. Hear Thou their prayers and tears. Blessed is the righteous in his life, and in his death. He shall see Jesus in the day when all tears are wiped away, and sorrow and crying are no more. The righteous shall never die. Fear sin, not death.’ Then, after a brief interval, he said, ‘Farewell. I am going to join the myriads of angels and archangels before the throne of God. Farewell sin, and farewell death. Praise the Lord. Praise Him for ever.’ After another interval he again made an effort to speak ; and we heard him say, ‘Praise God,—praise ;’ and at one o’clock on Saturday afternoon, the voice that had so often led the prayers and praises of religious assemblies was hushed for ever. He fell into the profound sleep which is technically denominated *coma*, in which he continued for several hours. Towards midnight Mrs. Gill and I retired into an adjoining room, leaving my father propped up with pillows on the sofa, and his feet on a footstool. My mother, who had never left him from the moment of his attack, except for a few minutes, remained with him, in company with my eldest brother, and one of my sisters. At ten minutes past four o’clock on Sunday morning, April 30th, 1854, we were summoned. The last breath had passed away.”

Thus ended the labours and the useful life of one of the most remarkable and distinguished men of his age. The next morning, just before the assembling of the Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in Exeter Hall, a telegraphic message was received in London, conveying the intelligence that he was no more ; so that,

instead of the announcement in the meeting, to which thousands of people had been accustomed from year to year, of "Dr. Newton and the collection," the Rev. John Scott, in a few appropriate sentences, stated to the assembly the peaceful end of that great man, and the loss which the Mission cause had sustained by his lamented decease. The information was received with solemn silence, but with many tears.

The funeral took place on the following Thursday, May 4th, in accordance with his implied wishes. He was buried in a vault belonging to his son-in-law, Mr. Gill, in the picturesque churchyard of Easingwold. During the brief interval that elapsed between his death and interment, hundreds of poor people came to see the remains of their esteemed Minister, bringing spring flowers in their hands to throw upon his coffin.

As a just mark of respect for so eminent a man, the President of the Wesleyan Conference, one of the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and several other Ministers and friends from various places, attended the funeral. At ten o'clock they assembled in the Methodist chapel in Easingwold, where the Rev. John Lomas, the President, gave out the following hymn:—

“Happy who in Jesus live,
 But happier still are they
 Who to God their spirits give,
 And 'scape from earth away!
 Lord, Thou read'st the panting heart;
 Lord, Thou hear'st the praying sigh:
 O 't is better to depart,
 'T is better far to die!”

After this he offered up an appropriate and affecting prayer.

The party then went to the house of the deceased, in the front of which the body was placed upon a bier; the coffin bearing the simple inscription :

ROBERT NEWTON,
DIED APRIL 30TH, 1854,
AGED SEVENTY-THREE YEARS.

The President then gave out the hymn numbered 49 in the Wesleyan Collection, substituting the word "father" for "brother," where it occurred :—

"Rejoice for a father deceased,
Our loss is his infinite gain ;
A soul out of prison released,
And free from its bodily chain ;
With songs let us follow his flight,
And mount with his spirit above,
Escaped to the mansions of light,
And lodged in the Eden of love.

"Our father the haven hath gain'd,
Outflying the tempest and wind ;
His rest he hath sooner obtain'd,
And left his companions behind,
Still toss'd on a sea of distress,
Hard toiling to make the blest shore,
Where all is assurance and peace,
And sorrow and sin are no more."

When the hymn was finished, the procession began to move, being led by a large number of Ministers, and attended by friends from adjacent towns and villages, with the greater part of the Methodist Society and congregation of Easingwold. The pall was borne by the Rev. John Lomas, Dr. Beecham, Dr. Hannah, the Rev. John Bowers, the Rev. William M. Bunting, and the Rev. Israel Holgate.

Following the body were the sons and daughters of the deceased, the sons-in-law, and other relations, with several of his grandchildren.

As the procession moved, the Rev. John Rossell, the Superintendent Minister of the Easingwold Circuit, read aloud the following hymn, which the assembly united to sing:—

“ Come, let us join our friends above,
 That have obtain'd the prize,
 And on the eagle wings of love
 To joys celestial rise :
 Let all the saints terrestrial sing,
 With those to glory gone ;
 For all the servants of our King
 In earth and heaven are one.

“ One family we dwell in Him,
 One church above, beneath,
 Though now divided by the stream,
 The narrow stream, of death :
 One army of the living God,
 To His command we bow ;
 Part of His host have cross'd the flood,
 And part are crossing now.

“ Ten thousand to their endless home
 This solemn moment fly ;
 And we are to the margin come,
 And we expect to die :
 His militant embodied host,
 With wishful looks we stand,
 And long to see that happy coast,
 And reach the heavenly land.

“ Our old companions in distress
 We haste again to see,
 And eager long for our release
 And full felicity :

Even now by faith we join our hands
 With those that went before ;
 And hail the blood-besprinkled bands
 On the eternal shore.

“Our spirits too shall quickly join,
 Like theirs with glory crown'd,
 And shout to see our Captain's sign,
 And hear His trumpet sound.
 O that we now might grasp our Guide !
 O that the word were given !
 Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,
 And land us all in heaven !”

The singing of this hymn was continued all the way to the parish-church, which was filled with people. The funeral service was read by the Curate with tender and earnest feeling ; and when the body had been deposited in its resting-place, the Wesleyan Ministers and friends, according to a previous arrangement, returned to the chapel, where Dr. Hannah delivered an appropriate and eloquent address on the character and labours of Dr. Newton, and the practical lessons which his removal was calculated to teach.

Funeral sermons on the occasion of Dr. Newton's death were preached in most of the principal chapels in England, six of which were published ;* for the entire Connexion

* Lights of the Church. A Sermon occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Robert Newton, D.D., preached in Tiviot-Dale Chapel, Stockport, on Sunday, May 28th, 1854. By the Rev. John Bedford. Published by Request.

Scriptural Views of Human Life stated and exemplified. A Sermon on Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Robert Newton, D.D. ; delivered in the Wesleyan Chapel, Pontefract, May 17th, 1854, by the Rev. Isaac Keeling ; and published at the Request of the Leeds District-Meeting.

The True Minister of God : his Office, Character, and Course. A

had long been his Circuit ; and the Societies and congregations throughout the land, as if by one consent, re-echoed the words of David, “ Know ye not that there is a Prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel ? ”

At the first meeting of the General Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society after the death of Dr. Newton, they passed the following appropriate Resolutions, expressive of the estimate which they formed of his character, and of the value of his services as an advocate of the institution, the management of which was intrusted to their care :—

“ That while, in common with the whole Methodist Connexion, the Committee mourn over the loss of one of the ablest, most laborious, most acceptable, and most successful Ministers of the Gospel, in this or any former age of the church’s history, they particularly commemorate with gratitude the most effective and valuable assistance rendered to this Society by their departed friend. From

Sermon on Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Robert Newton, D.D. Preached in Oldham-Street Chapel, Manchester, on Wednesday, May 17th, 1854. By the Rev. John Hannah, D.D. Published by Request of the Manchester and Bolton District-Meeting, at that Time assembled.

A Funeral Memorial of the late Rev. Robert Newton, D.D., Wesleyan Minister, delivered in Morrice-Street Chapel, Devonport, at the Annual District-Meeting of the Wesleyan Ministers, on Thursday Evening, May 18th, 1854. By George Jackson, Chairman of the District.

The Fall of Greatness: the Substance of a Sermon delivered in the Wesleyan Chapel, Landport, Portsmouth, May 14th, 1854, on Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Robert Newton, D.D. By the Rev. Robert Dugdale. Published in the Wesleyan Magazine for October, 1854.

The Faithful Minister of Christ passing to his Final Reward: A Sermon occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Robert Newton, D.D. Preached in the Wesleyan Chapel, City-Road, London, on Wednesday, May 24th, 1854. By Thomas Jackson. Published by Request.

its formation to the close of life his zeal on its behalf never declined, and all his energies of mind and body were most cheerfully employed in its service. Probably no man ever advocated the cause of the world's conversion more frequently, either from the pulpit or the platform, or succeeded in exciting so large an amount of practical sympathy with this great object. His remarkable powers as an orator were never exercised on a more congenial subject, nor more heartily put forth, than in connexion with the Missionary enterprise; and his loss will be long and keenly felt by those who from year to year have been accustomed to look forward to his visits as a most influential means of advancing that enterprise, both in the metropolis and in the various provinces of the United Kingdom. Such a loss the Committee feel would be irreparable, did they not know that the work which they are called to conduct and carry forward is emphatically the work of God; and it is their humble hope and prayer that He, at whose command that work has been undertaken, will Himself provide for its continued advancement, even while He removes those who have so largely assisted its progress hitherto.

“The Committee tender to the bereaved widow and family of their late beloved friend and coadjutor the expression of their affectionate sympathy; and desire to entreat for them the continued care and consolations of Him who is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.”

When the Conference assembled, the usual question was proposed, “What Ministers have died since the last Conference?” The name of Robert Newton was announced, and a solemn silence ensued. Tears were shed on every side, but for a considerable time no one seemed able to speak. The following character of the deceased was

adopted by that body, and published in the Minutes of its proceedings: —

“ROBERT NEWTON, D.D.—He was born at Roxby, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, on the 8th of September, 1780. He was first convinced of sin through conversations with the Rev. John Kershaw, when about fourteen years of age; and obtained salvation by faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ, while wrestling with God in prayer, two or three years afterwards, in company with his sister; when both were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. This great change was the foundation of all his subsequent eminence, both as a Christian and a Minister. At the early age of eighteen years he began to call sinners to repentance; and he was admitted into the Ministry, on probation, before he was nineteen years old; his peculiar gifts, manly appearance, and great acceptance and success being held to justify this departure from the usage of the Connexion. He had been but a short time engaged in the sacred work when he was urged to labour in some of the most important Circuits, to several of which he was re-appointed with increasing acceptance. His legitimate popularity drew him from his Circuits so frequently, in order to meet the demands of various public institutions, that at length it was found expedient to liberate him from the ordinary duties of the Ministry during week-days; and he availed himself of this opportunity to advocate, with unparalleled diligence, eloquence, and success, the claims of Methodism to pecuniary and active support. His vigorous constitution, and his perpetual serenity of mind, enabled him to sustain an amount of labour unknown, perhaps, in the church, except in one or two illustrious instances. It is supposed

that he travelled not less than six thousand miles a year, when transit was comparatively slow; and, in later years, some eight thousand miles; and he engaged in public services not less than twelve times a week, on an average. It is probable that he thus collected more money for religious objects than any other man. All the interests of Methodism were promoted, beyond the power of human calculation; and other churches and institutions, especially in former years, also reaped great advantages from his energetic advocacy. The Bible Society and various Missionary Societies were greatly aided by his labours, and have not failed gratefully to acknowledge those services. For many years he regularly attended the Anniversary Meetings of our own Missionary Society, and uniformly to their interest and advantage. In 1840, Dr. Newton visited the United States of America, as the Representative of the British Conference; and laboured, during his sojourn there, with extraordinary influence and effect. Four times, by the affectionate suffrages of his brethren in the Ministry, he was raised to the highest honours of the Connexion, as President of the Conference; and nineteen times he filled the distinguished office of its Secretary. Dr. Newton was eminently a Methodist Preacher, unfolding and applying Christian truth with simplicity, unction, and power. Perhaps no Minister's eloquence, in modern times, exercised so great an influence over the minds of men. His preaching was strictly popular, and found a response in every bosom, and among all classes of people. Its charm and power lay in its strictly evangelical character. He always preached Christ, and Christ's Gospel, in some of those leading and essential truths whereby the Holy Spirit

glorifies the Saviour. His evident aim was to become a fit instrument to be employed by God in the salvation of men. His *spirit* was eminently evangelical, devout, manifestly sincere and earnest, in sympathy with his subject and with his audience; full of life, joy, and goodness; and his looks, words, and tones fully expressed his own happy convictions. His style was simple, perspicuous, forcible, and conclusive; and his words and idioms were thoroughly English, fit for the most polished and fastidious, while the common people heard him gladly. His voice was extraordinary for its depth, compass, and power, and capable of vast modulation. His utterance was fluent, natural, and effective; and his action, free, and most impressive. He was 'as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.' His text announced his theme, which gave unity to his discourse. His introduction was appropriate, his divisions were simple and well-defined, and every part had a natural sequence. His thoughts, like his subjects, were well chosen; and, without show of argument, each passage carried conviction of the truth, as well as of the Preacher's belief of the truth. He was often the subject of great emotion in preaching; but it was always under control, and the power of the discourse was sustained to the last. It was no ordinary mind that could, for half a century, please and edify mixed assemblies, of the most diversified capacities and tastes, and always make what in fact is old produce the effect of novelty. But he cultivated large acquaintance with revealed truth, and carefully prepared his discourses, which, by a natural logic, were as much fitted to convince the hearer, as, by their

adorning and delivery, they were calculated to please and persuade. On the platform, Dr. Newton always found the highest acceptance; and his advocacy was eloquent and powerful. Ever true to Methodism, he consecrated time, talents, influence, everything, to the promotion of its interests, as a great work of God. In the day of trouble, rebuke, and opposition, he never quailed, but was always ready to suffer for Christ's sake. His consistency, his kindness, and his irreproachable life, gained him the affectionate respect of universal Methodism; and never was popularity so general and so unfading. His influence in the Connexion was the result of the power of character, knowledge of our discipline, and inflexible adherence to it, together with that kindness of heart which ever secured to him the love and confidence of his brethren. His intercourse with the people was extensive beyond parallel; and its effect was not only to endear himself to them, but also greatly to promote their spiritual good. At length his Herculean strength gave way, and he was compelled to relax his labours. In 1852, he requested to be allowed to retire from the more active work of the Ministry. He resided for a season at Southport; and, about a fortnight before his death, removed to Easingwold, trusting that the air of his native county might soothe, if it did not renovate, his wearied nature. He felt that he had finished his work; but he was perfectly prepared for the change for which he patiently and devoutly waited. He was seized with paralysis, and became unconscious. When he had recovered sensibility, being asked if he still felt Christ to be precious, he replied, 'O yes! Christ Jesus *attesting* and *blessing*. Christ is mine, and I am His. Christ is

my Rock.' To one of his daughters he said, 'Pray for a happy exit;' and, on the lines being repeated,—

'Away, sad doubt, and anxious fear:

Mercy is all that's written there,'—

he sweetly smiled, and said, 'I have no fear, no alarm: perfect love casteth out fear.' During his affliction, he often poured out his soul in strains of more fervid eloquence than his nearest relatives had ever been favoured to hear. On the morning previous to his death, he once more bade farewell to all his family; and then uttered, with an almost superhuman energy, the following among other sentiments:—'The preaching that flows from the heart does good every day.' 'Christ Jesus, the Ransom of sinners, and the Life of the dead.' After which, sinking back exhausted, he said, 'I am going—going—going—to glory.' 'Farewell sin; farewell death.' 'Praise the Lord.' His death-scene was indeed a triumph. He fell asleep about noon, and awoke no more until the blessed light of his Lord's immediate presence burst upon him, about four o'clock on the following morning, April 30th, 1854, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and the fifty-fifth of his most memorable ministry."

CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM the preceding record, it is presumed, a tolerably correct view may be obtained of the life and labours of the late Dr. Robert Newton; and yet a few additional observations upon the prominent features of his character, confirmed and illustrated by some additional facts, may not be unacceptable to the reader, nor devoid of benefit.

Personally considered, he was unquestionably one of the noblest specimens of human nature. He was somewhat taller than the generality of men, well proportioned in every part, robust, of great muscular power, evidently formed for activity, and capable of bearing almost any amount of labour. His breast was prominent, his shoulders broad, his gait firm and manly; so that even his appearance seemed to intimate that he was not born to spend his days in obscurity, but to take the lead among his contemporaries, and to answer some high and honourable purpose in life. His countenance was eminently prepossessing, being indicative of good-nature, kindness, generosity, frankness, intelligence, and decision; and these peculiarities, with—

“His fair large front, and eye sublime,”

at once impressed the persons who were brought into his presence, so as to command their respect, especially when they heard the sound of his incomparable voice. His noble bearing bespoke him as intended to “stand before Kings, and not before mean men.”

His mind was in beautiful correspondence with his out-

ward frame ; for he had a singular readiness of apprehension, facility in acquiring knowledge, a sound practical judgment, an easy and distinct utterance, and an instinctive perception of what is decorous and becoming ; so that, without the rules of a polite and artificial training, he was naturally a thorough gentleman, without affecting that character ; and in his general intercourse with society he exemplified a prudence which was perhaps never surpassed, and yet without the slightest compromise of moral principle.

These natural qualifications were all rendered doubly attractive and beneficial by the principles of piety with which his mind was imbued in early life, and which were perpetuated, in uninterrupted exercise and unimpaired vigour, to the end of his earthly course. True it is, that, like the rest of mankind, he was born in sin, and was by nature a child of wrath ; but, in the manner already described, he obtained the mercy of forgiveness, and the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, so as to be made happy in God, and a new creature in Christ Jesus. From this period, it would appear, he suffered no spiritual declension, but grew in grace, and “increased with the increase of God.” His was a life of faith in Christ, as a dying and interceding Saviour, and the Source of all spiritual good ; he lived in habits of devotion, breathing out his soul to God continually in prayer, thanksgiving, and praise ; the Holy Spirit constantly witnessing his adoption, and helping his infirmities in every act of duty. His love to God and man—the great principle of all holiness—was fervent and abounding ; so that to obey the Divine commands was his joy and delight, and to seek the good of mankind afforded a rich pleasure to his sanctified nature. His intercourse with God was habitual, being

maintained by constant prayer and faith ; and hence his was a happy religion. It rendered him eminently cheerful ; and it was no less deep, evangelical, scriptural, and practical. There was in it no airy speculation ; no mysticism ; nothing dark and cloudy. It was based upon the great truths of the Gospel, especially those which relate to the offices of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit. It rendered him both inwardly and outwardly holy, and constrained him to yield himself up as the willing servant of God, and for His sake the servant of all mankind. At the same time it placed him in an intimate alliance with the heavenly world, to which his hopes and desires were daily and hourly directed. In all this it is easy to perceive that he was guided solely by the Holy Scriptures ; for he attached no importance to anything bearing the name of religion, which has not the sanction of the word of God.

His character with regard to the domestic relations was in every respect exemplary. His love to his parents was tender and reverent ; and as they both lived to witness his deep and established piety, and his eminence as a Minister, great must have been their glorying on his account. To his brothers and sisters his love was sincere and undying.

What he was as a husband his correspondence in this volume declares. He treated his wife with unvarying kindness and respect, giving honour to her as an heir with himself of eternal life ; and he was deeply concerned for her happiness in both worlds. When they had lived together in unbroken harmony for fifty years, they celebrated the jubilee of their marriage, their children and grandchildren being present. On this memorable day, when these their descendants presented their tokens of filial love, he told them that during all those

years neither an unkind word, nor an unkind look, had passed between him and their mother, unless an incident which took place when he was stationed in Leeds might be regarded as an exception. He had, as usual, been from home during the week, and was expected to return on the Saturday evening. In the afternoon of that day, when sailing up the Humber, the steamer was enveloped in a dense fog; and the Captain, deeming it unsafe to proceed, cast anchor till about four o'clock on the Sunday morning, when the atmosphere became clear. At Selby he met with another interruption, having to wait a considerable time before the train started; so that he did not arrive in Leeds till about eight o'clock, when he had to procure a conveyance to his appointment, which was about eight miles distant. He had therefore scarcely time to inquire after the welfare of his family, who had been kept all night in a state of anxious suspense. As he had to meet some classes after the preaching in the evening, he did not reach home till about ten o'clock. On the Monday morning he rose at an early hour, having a long journey before him, and not expecting to return to his family before the end of the week. Mrs. Newton, according to her usual practice, rose to see him comfortably provided for before his departure; and, at the hour of five o'clock, as she was pouring out a cup of coffee for him, burst into tears, and said, "This is melancholy work." He said, "I left home that morning with a sad heart." It grieved him to find that his mode of life was a cause of sorrow to one who stood in so near and tender a relation to himself; but that which she for the time felt to be "melancholy," was a source of joy and everlasting benefit to thousands. That their

married life should have been thus happy, and blessed of the Lord, will excite no surprise, when it is recollected that it was their practice, through the entire period of their union, to retire twice a day for the purpose of praying with and for each other, except when his absence from home rendered it impossible.*

His fatherly affection for his children, and pious concern for their conversion and salvation, are strikingly apparent in the extracts from his letters which are now before the reader. Some of the last petitions to which his heart and lips gave utterance were offered to God in behalf of his children, whom he intensely desired to meet in heaven. Several persons, whose admiration of him in the pulpit and upon the Missionary platform was unbounded, have thought, that because he was not in the habit when he was from home of speaking much about his family, he was deficient rather than otherwise in the tenderness of his domestic affections; but they have entirely misapprehended his character. A kinder husband and father perhaps never lived; but then his kindness was not dotage. It was the kindness of an intelligent and strong-minded man.

What he was as a master is sufficiently attested by the fact, that two servant-maids, converted and Christian women, Nanny and Naomi, went with him and his family

* "Let man and wife pray together; let them confer with each other of their heavenly country; let them sing a Psalm together, and join in such religious exercises: so shall their hearts be knit together, fast and firm, to God first, and so to each other. Religion, we know, (as the word importeth,) is of a very binding nature; and therefore St. Peter would by no means that the prayers of the married should be interrupted."—Whately's "Bride-Bush," p. 49. Edit. 1619.

from Circuit to Circuit for many years, cleaving to them with the affection of children ; serving them with cheerful fidelity, under the impulse of esteem and gratitude, and rejoicing in their master's popularity and success. Nanny nursed the whole of their children, and three of their grandchildren. She died in the family at an advanced age.

As a Preacher he possessed many and eminent advantages ; such as a fine person and countenance, a rich, melodious, and powerful voice, a noble and manly bearing, perfect self-possession, fluency of speech, a distinct utterance, and an unfailing memory. As soon as he appeared in the pulpit, and cast his benignant look upon the congregation, the people could not withhold their admiration, and were naturally disposed to pay a respectful attention to his teaching. But when they heard the sound of his majestic voice, their admiration assumed a higher tone ; and they felt as if they could listen to him without weariness for any length of time. So far as our own experience has extended, his voice was unique. It was a deep bass, of vast compass, and yet capable of the softest and most musical modulations. He could make himself distinctly heard in the largest chapels, when most densely crowded, and that without the slightest straining ; and he could readily adapt it to a small congregation of peasants in a private dwelling-house. His voice had this peculiarity, that it seemed never to fail. However it might be taxed by the length and frequency of his public services, we never heard him complain of hoarseness, or of a pain in his chest ; nor were his hearers sensible of any diminution in its power, or in the sweetness of its tones, until he experienced a general decay of strength in the time of old age. In

the open air at Baltimore, he was heard by upwards of ten thousand people, and heard, without any perceptible variation, to the end of the service.

His self-possession was such, that, before the largest assemblies, he was so far at ease as to have the full command of his powers. His tenacious memory enabled him to cite the Holy Scriptures with verbal accuracy; and it may be fairly doubted whether, on any public occasion, he was ever known to pause, even for a moment, for the most appropriate word in giving expression to his thoughts.

Though the early years of his life, when the habits of speech are formed, were spent in a country village, where he never mingled with polished society; yet, such was the nice discrimination of his ear, that he retained scarcely any vestige of a provincial pronunciation. Nor was there the least stiffness in his manner of speaking. In his elocution all was elegant, proper, and natural. His voice was never so elevated as to be disagreeable, nor so depressed as to be unheard. Every sound was clear, and every word was distinct; so that aged people, and persons whose hearing was somewhat impaired, were always delighted to find that they could apprehend the whole of his discourses. From the unpardonable vices of screaming and whispering in the pulpit he was perfectly free; and, in that most sacred of all places upon earth, he never attempted to court attention to himself by any peculiarities of voice, action, or expression. He might, indeed, be said to speak from head to foot; his tones, his look, the action of his arms and hands, being all indicative of liveliness and animation: for in preaching he aimed at nothing, he thought of nothing, but to

make the people thoroughly understand the truth, and feel its power. We never heard from his lips a cold and heartless sermon.

As to the substance and character of his discourses, they were invariably orthodox, evangelical, experimental, and practical. He was unwavering in his attachment to the catholic faith, as it is embodied in the three Creeds which the Christian church has for ages recognised,—not because they have existed from a remote antiquity, and have been defended by learned men,—but because he found them to be in strict accordance with the Holy Scriptures. Whatever speculations even men of piety and erudition might advance, and attempt to support by philosophy and metaphysical argument, he held with a strong and unyielding grasp “the faith which was once delivered to the saints;” feeling that if men once surrender the plain and obvious meaning of God’s word, they will be at the mercy of every wind, and in the utmost danger of putting away a good conscience, and of making shipwreck of their faith.

Of the charge which our Saviour gave to His Apostles, “Preach the GOSPEL,” Dr. Newton was conscientiously observant. Whoever went to hear him preach, whether on special occasions, or in the course of his ordinary ministry, was sure to hear the GOSPEL, in some of its great and distinctive features, so as to receive an answer to the inquiry, “What must I do to be saved?” The universal guilt and sinfulness of mankind; their consequent helplessness and misery; the incarnation of the Son of God; the union in Him of the Divine and human natures; the glories of His person, as God manifest in the flesh; the spotless purity and perfect righte-

ousness of His life; the reality and perfection of His sacrifice; the tenderness, prevalence, and perpetuity of His intercession; His universal dominion; the necessity of repentance; justification by faith; the witness of the Holy Spirit to the fact of personal adoption; sanctification by the power of the Holy Ghost; the necessity of universal obedience; and a state of endless retribution: these, and kindred topics, with their practical application and bearing, constituted the substance of his very powerful ministry. Of these cardinal truths he never lost sight, and with him they never lost their interest. They sustained and nourished his own faith and hope; they were the exciting themes of his happy eloquence; and his manner of treating them retained an undying freshness to the end of his life. No Minister, at least in modern times, more fully exemplified the advice which was so eloquently given by a distinguished Prelate to his Clergy:—"Apply yourselves with the whole strength and power of your minds to do the work of Evangelists. Proclaim to those who are at enmity with God, and children of His wrath, the glad tidings of Christ's pacification; sound the alarm to awaken to a life of righteousness a world lost and dead in trespasses and sins; lift aloft the blazing torch of revelation, to scatter its rays over them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and guide the footsteps of the benighted wanderer into the paths of life and peace."*

There are three objects to be accomplished by the evangelical ministry which Christ hath instituted. The first is to impart right views of the Gospel, so that people

* Horsley.

may know what it really is; the second is to produce in their minds a conviction of its truth, so that they may regard it as a direct revelation from God to fallen men; and the third is to stimulate them to a corresponding course of action. That it may be to them a means of life and salvation, according to its declared purpose, they must understand its real nature, be impressed with its Divine authority, and so far comply with its requirements, as to turn to Christ in penitence and faith unfeigned, and yield themselves up to Him as His willing and devoted servants. The Minister who does not succeed in the attainment of these objects fails in that which is the great end of all preaching,—the salvation of his hearers. If his failure arise from their own wilful blindness and obstinacy, their blood is on their own heads; but if it arise from a defect in his ministry, he must bear the blame, with all its terrible consequences, for ever.

We hazard nothing in saying that the preaching of no man among his contemporaries was more directly adapted to secure these great purposes than that of Dr. Newton. His views of Gospel-truth were singularly clear, and his exposition of it was so lucid and well-defined, that it was impossible to mistake his meaning. As the messenger of God to dying men, he uttered no dark and ambiguous expressions; he occupied not his time with matters that are merely conjectural; but dwelt upon that which is undoubted truth, and presented it in its scriptural simplicity. At the same time he often referred to the evidences of Christianity, and proposed them in such a manner as was eminently calculated not to irritate, but convince. With the exception of the late Dr. Chalmers,

it may be justly questioned whether any other Minister of his age dwelt more frequently, or more successfully, upon the claims which the Gospel has to be regarded as a revelation from God. He showed especially that the very substance of the Gospel, when viewed in connexion with the mighty design which it is intended to achieve, fully justifies the splendid array of evidence by which its claims are supported. And certainly no man ever more earnestly, with greater depth of feeling, or with greater force of thought and expression, pressed upon his hearers the duty of practical attention to the warnings of the Gospel, immediate compliance with its invitations, and unreserved obedience to its precepts.

The effects which attended his ministry corresponded with its character. Not a few of the people whom he addressed took the warnings that he sounded in their ears, so as to turn from their sins to God; many contrite spirits were by him directed and led to the Saviour; and many became examples of holy living and of active zeal. Among his spiritual children are gifted and laborious Ministers, Local Preachers, Class-Leaders, Sunday-school Teachers, officers in Missionary Societies, and exemplary private members of the living church. They are found in all parts of the kingdom; and, as he advanced in life, they were made known to him in increasing numbers, so as to augment his thankfulness and joy, and encourage him to perseverance in his calling. We will select one example as a specimen of an indefinite number. Three or four years ago, when he was on a visit to Great Bridge, in the Wednesbury Circuit, the Rev. Thomas Harris, being in company with him, said, "The first time I heard you preach, Dr. Newton, was

at Middleton, near Manchester, in the year 1816, at the anniversary of the Sunday-school; and your text was, 'By grace are ye saved through faith.'" He replied, "Do you remember that a number of girls were placed on raised seats before, and on each side of, the pulpit; that when I made an appeal to the congregation for the support of the school, I put my hand upon the head of a girl who was nearest to me, and said,—'This child has an immortal soul, which must be either saved or lost. She will be either a glorified spirit among the saints, or a lost soul among the outcasts in hell, to all eternity. The design of our Sabbath-schools is the salvation of these children; to instruct them in the way of righteousness, to lead them to Christ, to fit them for usefulness on earth, and teach them the way to heaven.'

"Many years after this," continued the Doctor, "when I was stationed in the Manchester First Circuit, I was giving Society-tickets to a class, and, on calling the name of a middle-aged respectable woman, she said, after relating her experience, 'Pray, Sir, do you remember that, when you preached for the Sunday-school at Middleton, many years ago, you laid your hand on the head of a little girl, and gave a solemn address to the congregation?' 'Yes,' I answered; 'I remember the case distinctly.' 'Blessed be God,' rejoined the woman, 'I was that little girl; and such was the impression that was then made upon my mind, that it never left me; nor could I rest until I gave my heart to God, joined His people, and obtained His pardoning mercy. I have been a member of the Society ever since.' This was a heart-cheering testimony, and encouraged me in my labours for God."

Examples of personal conversion, effected by God's blessing upon his instrumentality, might be detailed through many pages in these memoirs. The day of the Lord will declare them all.

His sermons, as to their structure and form, were not all cast into the same mould, but presented an agreeable variety. Some of them were thoroughly argumentative; others simply didactic; others expository of the sacred text; and others again were beautifully picturesque. All nature loves variety, and why should not sermons partake of that character? We never, however, heard him deliver a sermon in the form of an essay; for he thought that a few clear and well-defined divisions in an oral discourse greatly assist the people both in apprehending the subject, and in their subsequent remembrance of it; and that this mode of proposing the truth is therefore to be decidedly preferred.

It has been sometimes alleged, in the way of complaint, that his sermons were common in respect of the subjects which they embraced. The fact is freely conceded. This was one of the prime excellencies of his ministry. He was too good a man, and too deeply impressed with the responsibility under which he was laid, to spend his time in the pulpit, and the time of the listening multitudes around him, in expatiating upon topics which might gratify by their novelty, but which have only a remote connexion with the everlasting interests of redeemed sinners, and are hardly comprehended in the commission of our Lord: "Preach the GOSPEL." The object of the Christian ministry is not amusement, but salvation,—a fact which seems to be forgotten by a large class of people in the present times, who indulge an unnatural craving for what they ominously call

“intellectual preaching.” Whether our Saviour or His Apostle St. Paul would have met the wishes of these fastidious hearers is extremely doubtful. The subjects of Dr. Newton’s ministry were “common,” because they all related to “the common salvation;” but his manner of treating those subjects was endlessly diversified, and always worthy of a man of genius and of taste. Not a few of his sermons, in his high and palmy days, were finished specimens of evangelical theology, of logical arrangement and argumentation, and of sanctified eloquence.

He often preached from the same text. This was unavoidable, partly on account of his incessant activity, and consequent want of retirement; and partly because he was too conscientious to deliver in the pulpit that which he had not previously studied and prepared with care. But though he repeatedly took the same text, and in discoursing upon it followed the same general line of observation and argument, his forms of expression and modes of illustration were different, and paragraphs were introduced as the circumstances of each service required. At the same time, his own heart was so impressed with the truths which he delivered, that persons who heard the same sermons a second or a third time felt that they possessed an undiminished interest and freshness.

His language in the pulpit is entitled to unqualified commendation. Notwithstanding his fluency as an extemporary speaker, he never weakened the effect of his sermons by a redundant verbiage, by long and involved sentences, by hard words, or by an affectation of deep thought, which is often nothing more than “darkness visible.” In the private journal which he kept when he visited America, he describes a sermon which he there

heard, as an "intellectual tempest, a storm of eloquence, at the antipodes of St. John and John Wesley." From such an artificial and unnatural mode of delivering the truth of God he conscientiously abstained. His words and idioms were purely English; the meaning of his sentences, according to the teaching of an ancient rhetorician, fell upon the mind of the hearer as the light of the sun falls upon the eye. What he said was not only intelligible to every one, but it could not be misunderstood. Persons of cultivated intellect admired his terse and nervous diction, and "the common people heard him gladly;" for they understood all that he advanced, and they clearly perceived that he meant to do them good. A Professor in one of the American colleges, after hearing him preach, thanked him for his sermon, observing that it was sound in doctrine, and delivered "in good Saxon English."

Some people, apparently wishful to show their own penetration, and to depreciate his intellectual character, have suggested that the popularity to which he attained as a public speaker, and the admiration in which he was generally held, are to be attributed mainly to his personal appearance, his voice, and manner; not considering that these peculiarities can never account for his correct and comprehensive acquaintance with revealed truth, nor for his luminous and energetic style. A fine voice and person can never make a man an accomplished Divine, nor give him the command of a pure and forcible diction. The fact is, he possessed a powerful intellect, and in the earlier years of his ministry he was a hard student, an attentive reader, a careful observer of the best models of effective preaching; and he practised himself diligently in literary composition. He had indeed every advantage of nature;

but he rose to eminence by labour, prayer, and perseverance. Genius, however brilliant, can never supersede the necessity of study. It is not possible, in the nature of things, that any man should attain to the sound and sanctified popularity of Dr. Newton without strict and laborious mental culture. His sermons were prepared with great care. They contained nothing crude and indigested; but, in respect both of thought and expression, were solid, rational, and manly.

In a body like that of the Wesleyan Methodists, where so much of public worship is extemporaneous, the gift of prayer is as important as the gift of preaching, and the cultivation of both is equally incumbent upon the Ministers and Pastors of the flock. To be able to lead the devotions of a worshipping assembly in an impressive and edifying manner is a most desirable acquirement. It is one of those "best gifts," which every one should earnestly "covet," and diligently labour to obtain. In this part of his work, as well as in every other, Dr. Newton was an example. His prayers were never stiff, systematic, and formal; but they were comprehensive, embracing the wants of individuals in all the diversified circumstances of life; the wants of the church; the wants of the commonwealth; the wants of the world. When engaged in this solemn duty, he was reverent, animated, importunate; and as free from all offensive peculiarities of voice and manner, as he was in preaching; neither beginning with a whisper which no one could hear, nor repeating the Lord's Prayer with irreverent rapidity, and in an altered tone of voice, as if it constituted no part of Divine worship. With him it was manifest the spirit of prayer was habitual.

As a friend and advocate of Missions to the Heathen,

he had many co-adjutors, but few equals. With regard to the great scheme of the world's conversion to the faith of Christ, his conduct was regulated by a few great principles, to which he adhered with undeviating constancy. The world is ruined by sin;—in heathen countries the corruptions of the human heart are rather stimulated and encouraged by idolatrous and superstitious forms of worship, than restrained by religious and moral truth;—Christ has redeemed the world, He is its sovereign Lord, and has declared it to be His purpose that all flesh shall see His salvation;—He has given it in charge to His Ministers, aided and sustained by all the other members of His church, to make His Gospel known to the ends of the earth;—that Gospel, accompanied by the quickening and sanctifying energy of the Holy Ghost, is the grand antidote to the sins and miseries of all nations;—past success demonstrates the power of the remedy;—and hence the commission of the Lord Christ should be prosecuted with the utmost diligence, fidelity, self-denial, and at all hazards. Connected with these principles, which had a firm hold upon his understanding and conscience, was the sacred feeling of holy love which predominated in his heart. Of that love God in Christ was the supreme object. He longed to see his Saviour known and honoured in all lands, and His praise celebrated in all the languages of the earth. He loved the world of mankind as redeemed by the blood of Christ; and he intensely desired that sinners of every tribe might be turned to their almighty and most merciful Saviour, so as to be made happy in Him for ever. Stimulated by these principles, and actuated by this love, he put forth his utmost efforts in behalf of the Heathen, with a glad mind,

until his spirit returned to God. For about forty years he continued his services in this cause without interruption, and certainly with unabated ardour. His Missionary speeches were quite as remarkable as his sermons. They were the free and spontaneous effusions of his warm and generous heart, rarely, if ever, studied beforehand, and mostly taking their character from incidents connected with the meetings in which they were delivered; but they were always kind, always pious, always encouraging, always pertinent; and they never failed to secure a hearty response. Upon the Missionary platform, as with the wand of an enchanter, he touched the springs of generous feeling in the hearts of the crowds around him, so that they not only gave their money, but gave it "with a right good will," and with earnest prayers that the proposed end might be answered. His visits to particular places never failed to give a new impulse to the cause by quickening the zeal of Committees and Collectors, and calling forth, both in old and young, increased liberality. It not unfrequently happened that persons were so impressed under his addresses, that when the meetings were ended, they were not satisfied with their givings at the collection, and afterwards requested permission to increase them. In one instance, a plain countryman, having apparently had a severe conflict in his mind, returned to the chapel after he had taken his departure, went into the vestry where the friends were counting the collection, and throwing a sovereign on the table, abruptly said, "Take it," and retired.

The rapid and steady advancement of the Wesleyan Missions, to the interests of which his labours were specially directed, afforded him a rich and enduring pleasure.

When he entered upon his public career in their behalf, the Missionaries were only fifty in number, and the members of Society under their pastoral care about seventeen thousand souls. He lived to see the Missionaries increased to upwards of three hundred and fifty, the church-members raised to one hundred thousand; and new Missions commenced in Africa, in India, in Australia, New-Zealand, and in the Friendly and Feejeean Islands. In the maintenance and extension of this great and good work he was, indeed, only one among an immense number of people like-minded with himself; but from the beginning he took a leading part in this vast enterprise of mercy, and soon left nearly all his companions behind at an immeasurable distance. He truly loved the Missionaries; he sympathized with them in their great work; he created an interest in their favour wherever he went; and when they returned home, disabled by age or sickness, no man received them with a more hearty welcome. To hear of the civilization of savages by means of the Gospel, of the abolition of cannibalism, of infanticide, and of other barbarous practices, afforded him a pure gratification; but when he heard of Heathens turned unto the Lord, so that they knew their sins forgiven, and were filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God, his joy rose to rapture, and he applied himself to his Missionary work with new and augmented zeal.

Among the other excellencies which constituted and adorned his character, his catholic spirit was not the least prominent. He claimed for himself the right of private judgment, and liberty of conscience, and without grudging he conceded the same right to every other Christian man.

That there should be among orthodox and spiritually-minded men diversities of opinion concerning church-government, and the metaphysics of theology, was to him no matter of surprise, and no cause of mortification. He never railed against the Established Church, nor against any of its Clergy or other members.* He never railed against the Dissenting bodies; he never spoke of them in language of contempt and bitterness; he never attempted

* Dr. Abraham Taylor, who was one of the most eminent of the Non-conformist Ministers in the early part of the last century, and second only to Dr. Waterland as an advocate of the catholic faith in opposition to the Arian heresy, thus addressed the son of his friend Hurrion, on the occasion of that son's ordination:—"I would entreat you to carry it well to those of the national Establishment who have any regard for the Christian cause. According to the sentiments in which I have been long settled, none would take fewer steps to meet them as to a comprehension than I should; but I cannot think this is a time to rake up all the old things which have passed between them and us. When they were allowed by law, they persecuted us; and when those of our principles had the power in their hands, they treated them in an unjustifiable way. The carriage of neither party will bear examining. It is agreeable to corrupt nature to compel persons to our opinion; and I doubt not, from what I know of these spirits, that the furious bigots for what they call 'liberty' would be the most dreadful oppressors of any. I humbly apprehend that this is a time to join our hands with theirs whose sentiments we cannot approve of about the government of the church, in defence of our common Christianity, the honour of Him whom all Protestants allow to be Head of the church, and the fundamental truths of the Gospel. It may make those who have not a word to say in defence of the truth as it is in Jesus, significant to talk with solemnity about keeping up the Dissenting interest; but if this is separated from a regard to truth of doctrine, purity of worship, and true Christian liberty, as it lies in our being free to plead for what we believe to be of importance, it dwindles into a state faction, about which it is not worth a wise man's while to trouble himself, as long as he is not deprived of his civil rights."—"An Exhortation to Mr. John Hurrion, delivered at his Ordination, May 3d, 1732," pp. 45, 46.

to foment among them a spirit of strife, or to exasperate their existing differences; he never interfered with their ecclesiastical arrangements; but held out to them the right hand of fellowship, and was ever ready to serve them in love. He had no sympathy with the men who are loud in their clamours for religious liberty, and yet are forward to persecute with their tongues and pens all who follow not with them. A scene which took place many years ago at Scarborough, on the Wesleyan Missionary platform, will show what manner of spirit he was of in respect of good men who differed from him in judgment. Upon that platform he found himself associated with the Rev. Samuel Bottomley, the Independent Minister, and the Rev. John Sykes, Pastor of the Baptist church, in that town. Mr. Bottomley addressed the meeting in a brief, sententious speech, full of meaning, "like apples of gold" in a silver basket. Mr. Sykes delivered an eloquent address, in which he represented such meetings as well adapted to unite together the various bodies of sincere Christians. Mr. Newton (for he did not then bear the title of Doctor) followed in the same strain; and then turning to the Baptist Minister, and stretching out his hand, he said, in his own inimitable manner, "Brother Sykes, if thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand." Then, addressing the Independent Pastor in the same tone and spirit, he said, "Brother Bottomley, if thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand." The three Ministers looked at each other and wept; the meeting instantly caught the flame; and all felt "how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Such was the prevalent feeling of his heart. A few days after this meeting, Mr. Bottomley said to one of his Methodist

neighbours, he had hoped that such a time would come, and had often prayed for it, but hardly expected to see it himself. He added, "That was a right platform on which we stood the other day."

The spirit in which he passed through his course of popularity is worthy of special observation. As a public speaker he was admired by all classes of people, and admired from the beginning to the end of his public life. His visits in the agricultural districts to open a new chapel, or to attend a Missionary anniversary, created a sort of festival. The surrounding country was in motion. Along the roads were seen farmers with their wives and daughters in gigs, market-carts, and other vehicles of less pretension; grey-headed men, each supported by his staff; labouring men in their Sunday clothing, and poor women in their cloaks and plain bonnets; young people, whose countenances told of health, and of godly cheerfulness; all wending their way to hear the far-famed "Robert Newton;" every one bringing some pecuniary contribution towards the advancement of the good cause. In these cases, the windows of the chapels where he preached were usually wide open, and the places crowded to suffocation. When he visited London, Dublin, and Edinburgh, he was always attended by eager multitudes, among whom were usually persons of distinction. For forty years he was familiarly known in nearly all the cities and large provincial towns of England; and with scarcely any exceptions, his visits to the end of his life were hailed with undiminished pleasure by the people. One cause of his popularity doubtless was his very agreeable manner, and his matchless voice; but the principal charm of his preaching was unquestionably to be found

in his spirit, and the evangelical character of his sermons. The Gospel, as it was expounded and proclaimed by him, presented a rich supply for every spiritual want, a healing balm for every wound and malady, an antidote to every grief and fear. The rich and the poor, the aged and the young, miners, manufacturers, artisans, agriculturists, men of science, and men without any education but that of rude nature, were all alike interested in his preaching; for it was an unmistakable echo of the prophetic exhortation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye." The spirit of the Preacher was in full accordance with his message. The people felt that he was concerned for their welfare; they were attracted by his benevolent tenderness; and, as in the case of Paul at Athens, "certain men clave to him," and looked eagerly for the time when he would repeat his visit, so that they might "hear him again of this matter."

His self-abasement and modesty, under all these demonstrations of public favour, are strikingly manifest. He was never observed to assume any airs of self-importance, to betray any signs of vanity, or to despise the least gifted of his brethren. The fact is, he had a deep and permanent conviction that the public favour which he enjoyed was the gift of God, vouchsafed for purposes the most sacred and momentous. It involved a responsibility which often made him quail and tremble. It was once observed in his presence, that he addressed from year to year a greater number of people than perhaps any other living man. He paused, and answered, "The greater is my responsibility." This is a subject to which he often refers in his correspondence with Mrs. Newton; connecting with

every mention of it a request that she would pray for him, so that he might "obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Never did he court popularity by flattering the people, palliating their vices, or neglecting to warn them of the fearful consequences of a life of sin. His popularity was not evanescent; for it was neither sought nor obtained by surreptitious means. It was the direct and unsought consequence of eminent talent, connected with an undeviating integrity, which was as transparent as a sunbeam. He never used his popularity for any purpose of selfishness, but laid all his honours at the feet of his Saviour, and most conscientiously used the influence which God had given him for the good of the people. From everything approaching to faction or party he stood aloof, and united in perfect cordiality with his brethren in the advancement of the common cause.

His prudence was not the least remarkable of his virtues. More than fifty years he spent under the immediate inspection of the public eye. During this time he sustained offices of trust, the duties of which were often critical and delicate, such as the Superintendent of a Circuit, the Chairman of a District, the Secretary and the President of the Conference. He was introduced into families in almost every grade of society, and in every part of the kingdom; he was thrown into every variety of company, when travelling in stage-coaches, railway-carriages, and steam-vessels; he addressed public meetings in which even royalty was present, and meetings consisting of simple-minded villagers: yet such was his attention to times, persons, and circumstances, that we never find him off his guard, or giving unnecessary offence to any one. An imprudent man, travelling over

every part of the Methodist Connexion from year to year, would be an occasion of incalculable mischief, by the utterance of idle gossip, or of personal prejudices; but Dr. Newton was an unmixed blessing wherever he went. He was a messenger of good, using all his influence to promote the peace and unity of the body. He was no talebearer, revealing secrets, and setting brethren at variance; nor did he ever take undue liberties with his friends, by any abuse of their kindness, so as to forfeit their confidence and good-will. On the contrary, they anticipated his visits with pleasure, and in all parts of the land received him with increased esteem and warmth of affection to the end of his life. His prudence was the more remarkable, because he was not cold and phlegmatic, but frank and generous in his disposition: yet the impulses of his generous nature never led him into acts of indiscretion.

Some persons, having found him to be all but silent in company, have concluded that he had no talent for conversation, and have endeavoured to ascertain the reason why a man of such extraordinary powers as a public speaker should have no aptitude for making himself agreeable and instructive in social intercourse. Their surprise is the result of inattention. His powers of conversation were worthy of his high character in other respects; but his mind was constantly occupied with his public duties. When he had finished one important service, and his friends around him were cheered and delighted with what they had heard from his lips, half a dozen other services equally important awaited him in immediate succession; so that while they were inclined to talk, he was anxious and thoughtful, knowing what

was expected from him the next day, and the day after; and he was desirous above all things, that Divine aid should be vouchsafed to him, and his labours in every place should not only be acceptable to the people, but useful, and approved by the great Master. In the pulpit he appeared to be free and easy; but perhaps no Minister ever had a deeper feeling of responsibility than he. Yet, when he could divest his mind of these official cares, which pressed so heavily upon him, his conversation was eminently instructive and interesting. He possessed an endless fund of anecdotes, the fruit of his own experience, and of his observations in his extensive journeyings; and these he freely and gracefully imparted: but his conversation, which was often eminently cheerful, never degenerated into levity and folly; nor was it even tinged with detraction and backbiting. It instructed while it pleased, and always tended to godly edifying, and to virtuous action.

To Wesleyan Methodism his attachment was strong and unwavering; but that attachment was not a blind and unreasoning bigotry. It was connected with the best and holiest feelings of his heart. He regarded the system as a pure and efficient form of apostolic Christianity; and as such he devoted his life to its support and extension. Its doctrines he believed to be the very truth of God, which was delivered by His incarnate Son, and by the Apostles in His name. He had examined them with diligence, prayer, and conscientious attention, and was thoroughly satisfied as to their scriptural authority; and he admired them the more, because of their holy tendency; for he found them to be equally opposed to antinomian licentiousness and pharisaic pride.

By the plain and earnest preaching of these doctrines, he saw that an incalculable amount of spiritual and moral good had been achieved. Hundreds of thousands of people, in the various gradations of society, and in all parts of the world, especially among the labouring poor at home, had not only been reformed in their outward conduct, but raised into such a "newness of life," as to be undeniably "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." They were examples of all that is beautiful and upright in religious character, and died in peace and hope. The power and blessings of a living Christianity, in the form of Methodism, he saw in the family of his own father; he witnessed the same in all the Circuits to which he was appointed; and demonstrative evidence to the same effect everywhere met his eye in his extensive journeyings, both in the United Kingdom and America. Doctrines which are so sanctioned by the Holy Spirit, as to be productive of such results, he thought must be in substantial agreement with the mind of God.

The discipline of the body he regarded as thoroughly scriptural in its leading principles; and its minuter details he knew were not devised by human ingenuity, as matters of speculation, but were adopted from time to time to meet the exigencies of what was undeniably a great work of God. The efficiency of the Wesleyan discipline is matter of historic testimony. It has been a means, under the Divine blessing, of preserving in the Ministry an uncorrupted orthodoxy for more than a hundred years; so that no form of heretical opinion has ever obtained currency in the body; and at this day, when theological speculation is rife in various quarters, the

Methodist Preachers "all speak the same thing," and are "perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment."

The absolute purity of any section of the church, in respect of piety and morals, however desirable, can never be attained in this world; and those religious communities are to be the most commended that make the nearest approaches to it. Men who have only "a form of godliness" will still find their way among the regenerated children of God; and even pure-minded Christians will occasionally degenerate. The Wesleyan discipline is found to be well adapted to detect evil where it exists, and to preserve a marked distinction between the church and the world; and its various institutions are ascertained to be a means of fanning the flame of real piety. Class-meetings, for instance, are invariably found to be prized in proportion to the spiritual-mindedness of the people; and the wilful neglect of them to be a sure indication of religious languor and decay.

That the Methodist Ministers and Societies are so intimately united as to constitute one body, is an arrangement which was adopted from the time of their origin, and one to which great importance has ever been attached. The right of Christian people to form themselves into churches independent of each other, if they prefer this order, is freely acknowledged; but then, it is presumed, they have an equal right to form direct and intimate alliances with each other, especially when the general cause of Christianity is likely to be extended by such an arrangement. The adoption of this order has always been regarded by the Methodists as connected with high and important advantages, especially in respect of the spread

of Divine truth, and the consequent advancement of the work of God. Many hundreds of small Societies, in villages and hamlets, consisting mostly of poor people, could never of themselves build chapels and support a ministry; but they are supplied with both in consequence of their union with other Societies, the strong helping the weak.

On these and other grounds Dr. Newton's attachment to his own people, and to their theology and ecclesiastical arrangements, was deep and conscientious. With a sincere and Christian respect for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, he resolved with regard to his Methodist brethren, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God." "The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part you and me." Among them he first drew the breath of spiritual life; by their instrumentality he was turned to Christ and saved; in his intercourse with them he realized "the communion of saints," and often anticipated the bliss of heaven: and hence his heart clave to them with an undying affection.

Of the strength of this affection he gave the most substantial proof; not satisfying himself with the mere utterance of words of esteem and kindness, but devoting to the interests of the common cause an unexampled amount of valuable labour. When a hope was once expressed to him that he kept an exact account of his extensive travels and ardent labours, he replied, "If I were to write such an account, nobody would believe it. My record is on high." He never affected to be a financier, and never courted distinction in that character; but he rendered essential service to the pecuniary interests of the body, at home as well as abroad, especially with respect to the trust-estates of chapels. Next to the great cause of

Missions, his time and talents were cheerfully devoted to their relief. There is reason to believe that he preached more sermons at the opening of chapels, and at chapel anniversaries, than any ten men in the Connexion. From three to four thousand chapels were erected during the period of his extraordinary popularity; and at the opening of the greater part of them he was present, and rendered his efficient aid. The Trustees of chapels generally enjoyed the benefit of his services, which they duly appreciated; for he was quite as willing to comply with their requests in small villages as in large and populous towns. Some years ago a woman in humble life, who was the principal support of a small Methodist cause in a village which is situated in one of the Midland counties, walked many miles to hear him preach, and asked him to pay a visit to her place of residence, that the people for whose salvation she was specially concerned might have an opportunity of hearing him. He looked at his interleaved almanack, where his appointments were entered, and told her that he had not a day at liberty before the Conference; but he took her address, and pledged himself that he would comply with her wishes as soon as it was possible. She returned, and reported to her neighbours that Dr. Newton would certainly visit them. They were incredulous, and especially one man, who laughed at what he deemed her folly. In a short time Dr. Newton received intelligence that an important meeting of a Bible Society, which he had engaged to attend, was postponed in consequence of the death of the gentleman who was expected to occupy the chair. He immediately wrote to the good woman, informing her of the event, and telling her that she might expect him on the day which to him had thus become

vacant. She was overjoyed, and sent a child with a leaf of laurel to the man who had been the most forward in ridiculing her hope, leaving him to infer what the leaf was intended to signify. Her worth was duly appreciated by those who knew her; and a family of distinction, hearing that so eminent a man was coming to be her guest, sent two of their servants to wait upon him; so that while he partook of the plain dinner which she had provided for him, two men in livery, with their white gloves, stood behind his chair, anticipating his wants, but finding their duties not very onerous. To his mind the scene presented an amusing combination of humble hospitality and high life. After a temperate meal he preached to the people with his characteristic warmth and cordiality. One knows not which most to admire: the pious energy of the good woman in the cause of Christ, or the readiness with which the popular orator undertook a long journey to strengthen her hands, and to advance the cause which was dear to both their hearts. This was one of the numerous adventures which he delighted to recollect, and to repeat in the circle of his friends.

It was not by labour only, that he showed his deep and unalterable regard for Wesleyan Methodism. He cheerfully submitted to suffer for it. When discontented men, who were "given to change," set themselves to subvert its godly order, and to disturb the peace of the Societies, he was amongst the foremost of the faithful band who withstood them to the face, and defended the sacred ark. When called to choose between the sacrifice of his popularity and the sacrifice of Methodism, he hesitated not for a moment; but, committing his cause to Him that judgeth righteously, he meekly submitted to the hissings and

violence of a mob, the jibes and misrepresentations of public agitators, and the revilings of low and disreputable newspapers; and had it been necessary, he would have submitted, as many of his noble-minded brethren have done, to scanty fare and threadbare clothing, rather than betray the sacred trust which he sustained.

Within the last three or four years, a few men (and very few, considering the circumstances of the body) who had part in the Wesleyan ministry, have renounced their connexion with Methodism, being unwilling to stand by it in the time of trial. It had raised them to honour, as public teachers, and thus given them a name and position in the church; but they forsook it in the day of its adversity, and some of them have lifted up the heel against it. Robert Newton was a "man of another spirit." He thought that if Methodism was worth embracing, it was worth defending. If it really is, when viewed in connexion with its results, as it has ever been regarded, a great work of God,—and if it has been a means of salvation to tens and even hundreds of thousands,—it ought not to be tamely abandoned at the dictation of unstable men, who, after all their clamour, have nothing to substitute in the place of it. As a conservative of Methodism, he was a man after John Wesley's own heart; and his name will be honourably transmitted to posterity with the names of the Thompsons, the Mathers, and the Pawsons of a former age. He was willing to sacrifice his ease and quiet, that the world in perpetuity might enjoy the benefits of that form of Christianity from which he had himself derived the greatest advantage. He could neither practise nor "praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and

unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."*

The single-mindedness and pious zeal of Dr. Newton were strikingly apparent through the whole of his public life. In accordance with the apostolic injunction, he was "fervent in spirit;" but his zeal never expended itself upon trifles. It was directed to objects of the highest possible importance. To promote spiritual religion, the conversion and salvation of the souls of men,—the great purpose for which the Son of God assumed the human nature, and died upon the cross,—was his only aim, his ceaseless endeavour. For this end he laboured, by prayer and study, to acquire every requisite qualification for the Gospel ministry; for this he rose early, and late took rest; for this he travelled extensively, by night and by day, enduring the summer's heat and the winter's cold; for this he sacrificed the pleasures of domestic intercourse, and became like a stranger and a visiter in his own family; for this he sacrificed the gratification which arises from learned leisure, and an acquaintance with polite literature; for this he submitted daily to breathe a corrupted atmosphere in crowded and heated assemblies. In this course of life he persevered with untiring ardour for nearly forty years, constantly preaching, praying, conversing, to bring sinners to their Saviour, and to send the Gospel to the Heathen. As an example of his pious zeal, even in social intercourse, it may be stated that, when he went to a place in the neighbourhood of Otley, to attend a Missionary Meeting,

* Milton.

he joined a considerable company at the house of a common friend; and when they left the house to repair to the chapel, he offered his arm to a young lady who was in a delicate state of health. Her father overtook them on the way, and proposed to release the Doctor from his charge, so that he might hasten forward to the meeting with greater speed than she was able to put forth. He declined the offer, saying that he should be at the meeting as soon as he was wanted. At a subsequent visit he found her recovered; and then confessed that the reason which induced him to walk with her, and to decline the offer of her father, arose from a desire to converse with her concerning the salvation of her soul; judging, from her appearance, that her abode upon the earth would be of only short continuance.

He was equally observant of every passing opportunity for defending the truth, and recommending the practical adoption of it to strangers, when he was placed in their company. Once, when travelling in a railway-carriage, he found himself in the presence of an infidel, who soon began to obtrude his opinions upon his fellow-passengers, declaring his contempt for the Bible, adding that he needed it not; the book of nature affording him all the information that he required on religious and moral subjects. Dr. Newton observed a young man in the company, who might receive injury from these remarks, and therefore deemed it his duty to interfere. Looking at the infidel, he said: "The book of nature, Sir, that you have mentioned, is a large volume; and he is a very learned man that is acquainted with all its contents; yet there is one subject on which I think it gives no information." "Indeed!" said the infidel: "what is

that?" "What is that?" rejoined Dr. Newton: "it is salvation." "Salvation!" answered the infidel. "Ay, salvation," responded the Doctor. "Every man is sensible, from what passes in his own conscience, that he has done wrong; and that which all people confess to be morally wrong everywhere meets our sight. To do wrong renders us liable to punishment; and therefore we need salvation. But where do you find anything about salvation in the book of nature? Do you read it in the grass of the field, either when it grows, or when it fades away? Do you find it in the ever-varying surface of the sea? or in the clouds, as they pass over your head? The book that you exclusively admire was written too soon for the purpose of instructing men with respect to the nature and method of salvation. It was written before there was sin in the world, and therefore before salvation was needed." The infidel stared aghast, but said not a word. An opportunity was thus afforded for calling attention to the value of the Holy Scriptures, which are inspired by God, and are able to make men "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Dr. Newton was, indeed, a man of one business, who might daily and hourly say,—

"For this alone I live below,
 The power of godliness to show,
 The wonders wrought by Jesu's name:
 O that I might but faithful prove!
 Witness to all Thy pardoning love,
 And point them to the' atoning Lamb."

Howard himself, in his career of humanity, as the friend of the friendless prisoner, did not pursue his call-

ing with greater singleness of purpose; and, in this respect, Burke's eloquent eulogium upon the philanthropist* is equally applicable to the Methodist Preacher. He travelled through the three kingdoms, not for amusement or pleasure, but to promote the spiritual good of mankind. For thirty years he was in the habit of visiting Ireland, north and south; but it does not appear, from his correspondence, that he ever went either to the Lakes of Killarney, or the Giants' Causeway. He visited London every year at the beginning of May, when the productions of art, and attractions of every kind, court the attention of the curious; but it does not appear that he was known to linger in the metropolis, even a single day, for the mere purpose of secular gratification. As he travelled through the country, we never find him turning out of his way to survey the mansions of the nobility and gentry, their rich furniture, their ample parks, their sumptuous gardens. The only exception that we have found in tracing his history is a solitary visit that he paid to the Land's End one morning, when he was in the west of Cornwall, and had no public engagement till the afternoon. The fact is, he felt that

* "He has visited all Europe,—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or collate manuscripts: but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original; and it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity."—Burke's Works, vol. iii., p. 422. Edit. 1852.

he was a bearer of the royal message of mercy to guilty men, and that "the King's business requires haste." When he left his father's house to be a Methodist Preacher, he gave up all for Christ, and from youth to age lived only to save souls. Other people might innocently direct their attention to matters of curiosity; but he was too much engaged with his Master's work to allow them to occupy his time.

If the inquiry be made, "Had he no faults?" the answer is, that he doubtless had both faults and infirmities, which he confessed and lamented before God in secret; but what they were I was never able to discover during an acquaintance of more than half a century; and as they were never reported to me upon any credible authority, they cannot be made matter of record in this place. A more pure and spotless character I never knew; and his excellencies were so nicely balanced, that it is difficult to say which of them preponderated. The Methodist Preachers and the Methodist people alike loved him as one of the chief ornaments of their body; for, in honour and dishonour, in youth and in age, at home and abroad, in his family and in the church,—when four thousand people in Exeter Hall rose up before him as a mark of respect, and when, for righteousness' sake, he was assailed by lawless mobs, and an equally lawless press,—they found him to be the same humble, modest, single-minded, cheerful, laborious, and upright servant of God and man.

We claim not for him the lofty genius of Watson, nor the patient research and varied scholarship of Clarke; but in moral worth he was not inferior to either of those great and good men, and in effective eloquence—the

eloquence which delights, impresses, and moves all classes of people—he surpassed them both. As a colleague he invariably treated his brethren in the ministry with kindness and respect. His principles of action were well understood; his transparent honesty commanded entire confidence; and everybody knew how he would act in any emergency. He would never betray a trust; he would never be faithless to a friend; he would never, for the sake of expediency, sacrifice righteousness and truth. He had no whims, no eccentricities, no singularities, no affectation. A true Wesleyan, he was the friend of all, and the enemy of none. From the pulpit he often addressed words of kindness and sympathy to his “brethren upon the free seats;” and it was most gratifying to see poor men and women surrounding him when he retired from the chapels where he had been preaching, requesting a shake of his hand, and telling him of some members of their families at distant places, who had been converted under his ministry.

Great was the honour which his Lord put upon him at the close of life. His dying consolations and testimony were in beautiful accordance with his conduct and ministry. His powerful intellect suffered no decay; and when his work upon earth was finished, he at once passed to the society of the blessed.

The character and success of this remarkable man suggest lessons of encouragement to the friends of religion. Evils of fearful magnitude, and in vast numbers, exist both at home and abroad. Infidelity, superstition, worldliness, idolatry, and every form of wickedness, still prevail, and hold mankind in wretchedness and bondage, although the world has been redeemed eighteen hundred

years; and the Gospel, during this long period, has been in the hands of the church, as the grand means of the world's conversion. Yet there is no ground for despair.

—————“The great Shepherd reigns,
And His unsuffering kingdom yet will come.”

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